

QUEEN ELIZABETH



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*(From the portrait by an unknown artist in the
National Portrait Gallery)*

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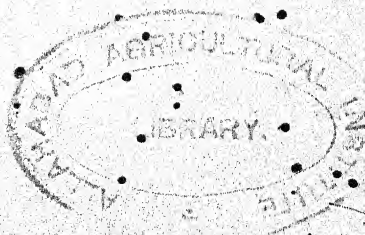
BY

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WITH A FRONTISPIECE

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PREFACE

THIS book must not be judged by its omissions. It does not pretend to be a history of England during the reign of Elizabeth, nor did the space at my disposal allow of its being a full-dress biography of the Queen herself. It is but a drawing in outline, and my single aim has been to make that outline accurate. To this end the problem has been first and last that of selection. I make no claim to originality—but only to a truthful and, I trust, a discriminating use of my material.

My thanks are due to the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery for allowing me to reproduce the portrait of Queen Elizabeth.

MONA WILSON.

THE OLD OXYARD,
OARE, MARLBOROUGH.

CHAPTER I

'Much suspected, of me
Nothing proved can be,
Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.'

ELIZABETH TUDOR was born on September 7, 1533, at Greenwich. She was a disappointment to her parents, Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn, flattered in their hope of a male heir by the prophecies of astrologers and soothsayers. Henry's former marriage with Catherine of Aragon, widow of his brother, Prince Arthur, had been declared invalid by Archbishop Cranmer, and Elizabeth therefore replaced Mary, their only surviving child, as heir to the throne. Mary, a girl of seventeen, was ordered to relinquish the title of Princess, and attend the baby as a member of her household. After the first two or three months at Greenwich the little Princess had her own establishment, and only saw her parents occasionally. On one of their visits when she was about seven months old, it is recorded that 'Her Grace is much in the King's favour, as goodly child should be, God save her!' When the news came of



Catherine's death in 1536, Elizabeth was 'conducted to Mass with trumpets and other great triumphs'; after the banquet, Henry, clad in a gala suit of yellow with a white plume in his yellow hat, carried her round the hall in his arms, proudly exhibiting her to his Court. But her pomp was short-lived; a few months later Anne Boleyn was beheaded, and her daughter declared illegitimate. Elizabeth's governess, Lady Bryan, was concerned about the ambiguous position of her charge. Who is going to replenish her wardrobe? 'She hath neither gown, nor kirtle, nor petticoat, nor no manner of linen, nor forsmocks, nor kerchiefs, nor rails, nor body stichets, nor handkerchiefs, nor sleeves, nor mufflers, nor biggens.' A member of her household, Shelton, a kinsman of Anne Boleyn's, is subverting all discipline by insisting that the little girl shall always dine in state. Obviously she will clamour for all the meats and fruit and wine on the table, 'and she is yet too young to correct greatly.' To make matters worse, she is cutting her teeth slowly and painfully, and though 'as toward a child and as gentle of condition as ever I knew any in my life,' she has to be given her own way. In due course Lady Bryan had another charge committed to her care, Prince Edward,

the son of Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour. Elizabeth spent part of her time with her brother, and part in separate establishments at Cheshunt or Enfield, sometimes on a visit to Whitehall or St. James's. Her presence at Court was due to the intercession of the last and best of her stepmothers, Catherine Parr. But she offended Henry in some way and was banished for a year. Then—thanks again to Queen Catherine—he writes from the siege of Boulogne, sending 'our hearty blessings to all our children,' and Elizabeth was restored to favour.

Henry VIII. reinstated both his daughters in the succession before his death early in 1547. A month later the Lord High Admiral, the handsome and ambitious Thomas Seymour, sought Elizabeth's hand, but easily consoled himself with an older love, the Queen Dowager. Mary, indignant at the disrespect to their father's memory, begged Elizabeth to leave Catherine, with whom she was then living in Chelsea, and set up a joint household with herself. This Elizabeth thought impolitic, or, it may well be, she preferred her stepmother's society to Mary's. But Seymour persecuted the girl with his gross attentions: even Catherine, who failed to realise that Elizabeth

was no longer a child, sometimes joined in unseemly romps, until one day she found them alone together, Elizabeth in Seymour's arms. After this Elizabeth had a separate household at Cheshunt, but there was no breach in their affection. Catherine was expecting a child, and her 'humble daughter, Elizabeth,' wrote anxious letters about her health with the precocious jest 'and if I were at his birth, no doubt I would see him beaten, for the trouble he hath put you to.' Catherine died a week after her confinement, and Seymour at once renewed his proposal to Elizabeth through her governess, Catherine Ashley, a connection of Anne Boleyn's. Early in 1549 he was arrested on a charge of high treason, one of the counts against him being that he had endeavoured to marry an heir to the throne without the Council's consent. Mrs. Ashley and the steward, Thomas Parry, were also arrested, and Sir Robert Tyrwhit arrived at Hatfield with instructions from the Council to obtain evidence from Elizabeth against him. Tyrwhit had a hard task—'I do assure your Grace she hath a very good wit and nothing is gotten of her but by great policy.' All he got, after persistent cross-examination, was the admission that a marriage with Seymour had been discussed,

but never contemplated, either by Elizabeth or Mrs. Ashley, save with the Council's consent, neither had she committed herself to any promise by message or writing. Tyrwhit's reports of his interviews, and Elizabeth's own letters to the Regent, Protector Somerset, show that she conducted her case with remarkable astuteness for a girl of fifteen, and with a diplomatic insistence upon her own anxiety to be perfectly frank in her statements. Her story conformed so well in its details with that of Mrs. Ashley and Parry, that Tyrwhit was convinced that it had been agreed on between them. Parry's confession described Seymour's familiarities with Elizabeth before her stepmother's death, a humiliating but not a dangerous disclosure. Hearing from Tyrwhit the rumour that she herself had been sent to the Tower and was with child by Seymour, she wrote to Somerset :

' My Lord, there are shameful slanders, for which, besides the great desire I have to see the King's Majesty, I shall most heartily desire your lordship that I may come to the Court after your first determination that I may show myself there as I am.' "

Elizabeth was not allowed to give the demonstration she desired, but the Council

had the grace to grant her further dignified request :

‘ But if it might seem good to your lordship, and the rest of the Council, to send forth a proclamation into the countries that they refrain their tongues, declaring how the tales be but lies, it should make both the people think that you and the Council have great regard that no such rumours should be spread of any of the King’s Majesty’s sisters, (as I am, though unworthy,) and also that I should think myself to receive such friendship at your hands as you have promised me, although your lordship hath showed me great already.’

Seymour was executed in March 1549. After the shock of his death Elizabeth was desperately ill, and she suffered from at least intermittent ill-health for the next four years. Perhaps her aversion from matrimony had its root in the ghastly termination of this incident.

She now devoted herself to her books and needlework. One of her tutors, Roger Ascham, has left a glowing account of Elizabeth’s scholarship, but it may be hoped that her young brother did not accept her quotations from *Orace* unchecked, and her translations which have come down to us suggest a fitting patroness for the IVth Form boy. ‘ But once though wicked he gave unmeet curules to reverent fathers.’ • She seems to have spoken Italian,

Spanish, and French fluently, but it is difficult to believe that those amazing extempore orations in Latin, of which we hear later, did not owe a good deal to the royal lips by which they were uttered. Ascham notes her love of metaphors and antitheses. It is characteristic of Elizabeth's inconsistency, or rather complexity, that she had always two different styles at command, one so tortured and obscure that it is sometimes difficult even to guess her subject, the other, as in the best of her speeches, simple, direct, impassioned, sincere.

In the spring of 1551 Elizabeth was summoned to Court for the first time since the Seymour episode. There she played the Puritan maiden with great effect, rebuking by her plain attire the ladies of the Court, 'dressed and painted like peacocks.' Her cousin, the Lady Jane Grey, was impressed by her example. 'Nay,' she said, refusing a gift of rich garments sent by Mary, 'that were a shame to follow my Lady Mary, who leaveth God's word, and leave my Lady Elizabeth, who followeth God's word.' The pale, sad-faced girl at Windsor, in a simple pink frock, clasping a heavy book, pictures Elizabeth in this phase. And the King called her his 'sweet sister Temperance.' There must always have been an alliance, be-

coming more conscious and explicit as they grew older, between the two clever and precocious children against their step-sister Mary. They represented the new world in the making, the new learning, the new religion, England as against the foreigner. Mary, Elizabeth's senior by seventeen years, was to them an elderly person, out of date in all her views, half Spanish by birth, and partly responsible, as they knew, for the Popish risings which had disturbed the peace of the country. Now she, too, was at Court, obstinately maintaining her right to have Mass celebrated in her private chapel. This tussle continued: when the King sent her a letter of remonstrance a few months later, she discounted it with the remark—'Ah! good Master Cecil took much pain here,' and told off the Council's emissaries who presented it—'My father made the more part of you almost out of nothing.' The Council succumbed to the Tudor will: Mary continued to hear Mass unmolested.

In July 1553, Edward vi. died and the Lady Jane was proclaimed Queen. Elizabeth was sent for: she excused herself on the ground of ill-health, but, when the conspiracy had failed, was well enough to forestall Queen Mary's arrival by riding in state through the streets of

London to Somerset House, where she took up her abode. Four days later the Queen made her triumphal entry, and Elizabeth rode by her side.

Elizabeth's first instinct had been that of loyalty to Mary : the Tudors must stand together. But, Mary once on the throne, the latent issue disclosed itself. Mary, with her romantic devotion to Philip as Spaniard and as soldier of the Church, was before all things a Roman Catholic. To Renard, the Ambassador of the Emperor Charles v., and to some other of her advisers, Elizabeth was from the first a possible pretender. Elizabeth herself knew that indiscreet friends might push her forward dangerously soon. Mary's waning popularity or death might at any time bring the crown within her reach. To be precipitate would be fatal, yet she must show herself to the country as Edward's true successor, the representative of the new age as against religious and political reaction. Like the man in Rabelais who was prepared to maintain his faith to the stake (exclusive), she was ready to exploit the rôle of Protestant confessor, but she had no intention of slipping into that of virgin martyr. She made her first demonstration by refusing to go to Mass. In so doing

she was only following Mary's own example. Mary had clung to the observances of her faith during Edward's reign. Mary was shocked. Elizabeth, cautiously and perhaps sincerely, pleaded her Protestant upbringing : she was ignorant of Roman Catholic practices and sought instruction. At length she professed her willingness to attend Mass on the Nativity of our Lady, but, at the eleventh hour, tried to escape with the excuse of a stomach-ache. Neither Mary nor her advisers believed in the genuineness of the conversion or of the indisposition, but Elizabeth protested her good faith, and kept up a diplomatic minimum of conformity. None the less the Queen had her closely watched, and showed her marked disfavour. The ladies of the Court were afraid to speak to her, but Elizabeth set herself to fascinate the men. She was packed off to her house at Ashridge. The Queen, who was not an unkindly woman except where heretics were concerned, parted from her with gracious words and the gift of a handsome sable wrap, and Elizabeth responded by asking for copes and chasubles, chalices, crosses and patens, that Mass might be duly celebrated in her chapel.

Early in 1554 there was an outbreak of just

the folly Elizabeth had most to fear. Sir Thomas Wyatt, backed by the French king who dreaded the alliance between England and Spain, led an insurrection with the object of marrying her to Edward Courtenay, a descendant of Edward iv., and putting the couple on the throne. When, thanks to Mary's personal courage, the rebellion had been quelled, Elizabeth was summoned to London. She pleaded illness. The incalculability of Elizabeth's health was one of her assets. She was by no means robust, but a strong will, and a power of rallying quickly from apparently serious illness, prevented health from standing in her way, and her ailments were, no doubt, sometimes a matter of convenience. The doctors, who accompanied the Queen's commissioners, decided that she was fit to travel, and the journey was accomplished in several stages. The news of her approach had spread : as she and her guard, two hundred strong, came down from Highgate village towards the City, a staring crowd surged along their road. Only a few days before that most guiltless of conspirators, the Lady Jane Grey, had perished on the scaffold. Did Mary's safety require yet another sacrifice ? Elizabeth ordered that the covering of her litter should be withdrawn,

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and she revealed herself—the month was February—clad in innocent white, pale and scornful. Mary refused to see her, and she was confined with a small retinue in separate quarters at Whitehall, a medley of buildings, gardens, tiltyard, cockpits, backed on the east by the Thames, and skirting St. James's Park on the west. Three weeks later she was told that a barge was waiting to take her to the Tower. She wrote to Mary an eloquent protest against the command 'to go into the Tower, a place more wanted for a false traitor, than a true subject ; which though I know I deserve it not, yet in the face of all this realm appears that it is proved. I pray God I may die the shamefullest death that ever any died, afore I may mean any such thing ; and to this present hour I protest afore God (Who shall judge my truth whatsoever malice shall devise) that I never practised, counselled, nor consented to anything that might be prejudicial to your person in any way, or dangerous to the State by any means.' All she gained was the loss of the tide and another day at Whitehall. Next morning, a rainy Palm Sunday, while the citizens were at church, Elizabeth was taken by barge from the Westminster Water-gate to the Traitors' Gate at the Tower. She

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dashed away a proffered cloak, exclaiming, 'Here lands as true a subject, being prisoner, as ever landed at these stairs. Before Thee, O God, I speak it, having no other friend but Thee alone !' The Lieutenant implored her to come in. 'Better sit here than in a worse place, for God knoweth, not I, whither you will bring me.'

Her most dangerous enemies were Charles v. and his ambassador, who reinforced his arguments about the proper way of dealing with rebels by presenting Mary with a French translation of Thucydides. Elizabeth gave herself up for lost ; she determined to ask one favour only, that her head, like her mother's, should be severed by a sword in the hands of a French executioner rather than by an axe. Members of the Council were instructed to examine her, but she baffled them as she had baffled Tyrwhit, and Wyatt on the scaffold exonerated her from complicity. After more than two months in the Tower she was sent to Woodstock under the charge of Sir Henry Bedingfield, receiving demonstrations of public sympathy on her way.

Sir Henry had no easy task. Elizabeth was petulant and haughty, sick and full of grievances : his guardianship had to be strict, but

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was in no wise cruel. Elizabeth addressed some letters to the Queen, who decreed that 'we shall not be hereafter molested any more with her disguised and colourable letters.' Then Elizabeth thought it was time to make her confession and take the sacrament, a more propitiatory step. In April 1555 she was summoned to Hampton Court, but still as a prisoner under Bedingfield's charge. Soon after her arrival she was told to wear her richest attire, and received a private visit from her new brother-in-law, King Philip. Philip, unlike his father, had never advocated extreme measures; he thought it enough, in the Spanish interest, that Elizabeth should marry the Duke of Savoy and leave the country. She did not see the Queen till some three weeks later. Then, as in earlier interviews with members of the Council, she steadily refused to ask for pardon, as she would admit no offence. 'Well, then,' said the Queen, 'you stand so stiffly on your truth, belike you have been wrongfully punished.' 'I must not say so to Your Majesty.' 'But you will report so to others, it seemeth.' 'No, an please Your Majesty, I have borne, and must bear, the burden thereof; but I humbly beseech Your Grace's good opinion of me, as I am, and ever have been,

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Your Majesty's true subject.' Mary was touched : she spoke a word or two of kindness, then turned away, saying to herself in Spanish, 'God knoweth.' Philip's influence was in Elizabeth's favour : a few days later Bedingfield was dismissed, and she was no longer a prisoner. After this she often saw the Queen and attended Mass with her, although she was kept in the background on public occasions, and was despatched to Hatfield before Parliament opened, receiving an ovation as she passed through London.

Elizabeth had won : after this her relations with the Queen were perfectly correct. When another plot in her favour failed, Ascham's pupil—he was again in charge of her studies—wrote to congratulate Mary on the miscarriage of the conspiracy in fearless enjoyment of her best Isocratean manner :

'When I revolve in mind (most noble Queen) the old love of Paynims to their princes, and the reverent fear of Romans to their senate, I cannot but muse for my part and blush for theirs, to see the rebellious hearts and devilish intents of Christians in name, but Jews in deed, towards their anointed king, which methinks if they had feared God, (though they could not have loved the state) they should for the dread of their own plague, have refrained that wickedness, which their bounden duty to your Majesty had not

restrained. But when I call to remembrance that the devil *tanquam leo rugiens circumvenit, quaerens quem devorare potest*, I do the less marvel that he has gotten such novices into his professed house, as vessels (without God's grace) more apt to serve his palace than meet to inhabit English land. I am the bolder to call them his imps, for that St. Paul saith, *Seditiosi sunt filii diaboli*; and since I have so good a buckler, I fear less to enter into their judgment.'

Later in 1556 Elizabeth was allowed to return to Court in order that Mary might press her marriage with Philip's cousin and candidate, the Duke of Savoy. The scheme was transparent: she was to be packed off into exile, and if the crown ever came to her, it would be as a gift from Spain and on Spanish conditions. Elizabeth refused, but Mary was so angry that for once her heart failed her. She sent a secret emissary to the French ambassador, saying that she would accept the refuge which King Henry had promised on several occasions, and escape to France. Henry's offer was not, of course, altruistic: if Mary died without an heir and Elizabeth were out of the way, he hoped to secure the English crown for Mary Stuart. The Ambassador told Elizabeth with surprising frankness that, if she wished to be Queen, she must not leave the country, and he afterwards

maintained that she owed her crown to his advice.

After only a few days in London, Elizabeth was sent back to Hatfield. There, in the spring of 1558, she received a secret proposal of marriage from the Crown Prince of Sweden, which she dutifully referred to Mary. The Governor of her household, Sir Thomas Pope, reports her as saying :

‘ And as concerning my liking the said motion made by the said messenger, I beseech you say unto Her Majesty that to my remembrance I never heard of his master before this time ; and that I so well like both the message and the messenger, as I shall most humbly pray God upon my knees that from henceforth I never hear of the one nor the other : assure you that if he should eftsoons repair unto me, I would forbear to speak to him. And were there nothing else to move me to dislike the motion, other than that his master would attempt the same without making the Queen’s Majesty privy thereunto, it were cause sufficient.’

It was clear that Mary’s death was at hand. Again influenced by Philip, she declared her willingness that Elizabeth should succeed her if she would pay her debts, and maintain the Roman Catholic faith. Elizabeth sent a gracious reply. On November 17, 1558, Mary died, and Elizabeth was proclaimed Queen.

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When the news reached her at Hatfield, 'falling on her knees (after a good time of respiration) she uttered this Verse of the Psalms, *A Domino factum est istud, et est mirabile in oculis nostris.*' The church bells rang, bonfires blazed, and the citizens of London feasted in the streets, rejoicing in the accession of a Protestant, an Englishwoman with no taint of Spanish blood, and a Lord Mayor's great-granddaughter.

CHAPTER II

‘Nus et nostre poeple.’

ELIZABETH had studied history. It flattered her to be told that she was more like her father than Mary. When she overheard one of the crowd in Cheapside say, ‘Remember old King Henry theyght,’ she smiled. Henry VIII., still a great name in the country, had been popular with the common people. She was, in a measure, Henry’s first real successor : Edward was king only in name : Mary had governed the country in the interests of Rome and Spain. But Henry was a warning as well as an example. Too ready to lend himself as an ally in the quarrels between foreign Powers, an ally to be trapped and tricked in his turn, he had not given the country peace. His finance was bad: the currency was debased, and, in his need for frequent subsidies, he had allowed his ministers to grind the face of the poor. His matrimonial adventures had been a scandal and a perturbation to the country, though Elizabeth, with a filial lack of humour, once maintained that

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she was at liberty to marry a subject if she chose, as her father had done so several times. She said little of her mother, and never attempted to remove the stain upon her good name, but she bestowed office and honours on her mother's relatives. The Boleyns had come of thrifty merchant stock, and it was from them that Elizabeth inherited her business instincts: her middle-class blood made her 'mere English' in more senses than one. She was an aristocrat as well, and from the White Rose, her grandmother, the lovely Lady Bessy, with her long yellow hair, whose girlhood had been as perilous as her own, she had inherited her love of pageantry. But above all she was a Tudor: if her manners were her father's, her mind had much in common with her grandfather. There was a feminine cast about Henry VII.'s character: he had strong intuitions, but they only visited him at the eleventh hour. Bacon's sketch suggests a strong resemblance to his granddaughter:

'His wisdom, by often evading from perils, was turned rather into a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers when they pressed him, than into a providence to prevent and remove them afar off. And even in nature, the sight of his mind was like some sights of eyes: rather strong at hand than to carry afar

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off. For his wit increased upon the occasion ; and so much the more if the occasion were sharpened by danger.'

But more important than any lesson from history had been the long pupilage of her own experience. She had watched Mary's mistakes and her failure to win the love of the people. When she came to the throne, Mary too had been acclaimed by public rejoicing : now she was unwept and forgotten. There was a sinister side to her own instant popularity : how could she keep it ? There must be no successor and rival waiting to divide allegiance, no one to play the part she had played herself during Mary's reign.

Elizabeth was twenty-five when she became Queen. Her graceful upright figure made her seem tall, though she was in reality about middle height. Her hair was auburn, her eyes fine, and the slightly hooded effect of the eyelids in her portraits suggests something at once bird-like and a little terrifying : the effect is heightened by the high bridge of the nose and the prominent cheek bones. There are no subtle curves and alluring dimples : the sallow complexion called for the relief of rouge. Striking and vivacious rather than beautiful, her face depended more on expression than on

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feature, and lent itself readily to caricature. Both she and her subjects were dismayed by the results in unskilful hands. Later on a Court painter was appointed : portraits ' to the offence and disgrace of that beautiful and magnanimous majesty wherewith God hath blessed her ' were destroyed, and no more issued ' but such as her Majesty's sergeant Painter shall first have a sight of.' No portrait does justice to the lovely hands, with their long slender fingers, of which she made constant and effective use. Her power lay not in feminine charm, but in the magic of a compelling personality, *l'esprit d'incantation*, as a Frenchman described it, while Philip's ambassador wrote : ' She seems to me incomparably more feared than her sister, and gives her orders and has her way as absolutely as her father did.' He told Philip, too, that ' She is very much wedded to the people and thinks as they do.' He tried to get her to admit that she owed her crown to Philip, but she said that it was the gift of her people alone. Here lay the secret of Elizabeth's power : throughout her reign she could and did boast that she had always kept the love of her people. She gave a new emotional meaning to the old legal phrase *Nus et nostre poeple*. Individually they

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might be her subjects or her servants, but she endowed them with a collective existence, which owed something, perhaps, to the *Populus Romanus* of her readings with Ascham.

It was clear enough what her people wanted, complete independence of Spain and France and the Papacy. A Spanish king, the loss of Calais and the fires of Smithfield had left them in an aggressive mood. But the financial position was critical : Mary had been extravagant and had also paid over large sums to Philip. The desired results, comprehension at home, and a balance of power abroad, must be secured by consummate diplomacy, not by aggression. Danger from Spain was not imminent : she still regarded England as a useful little friend. Philip had not yet given up all hopes of Elizabeth. The one specific peril lay in a Franco-Scottish alliance and the encirclement of England. The situation in Scotland and the settlement of Church affairs at home were alone pressing ; these required speedy and vigorous treatment : the rest could wait.

Elizabeth had lost no time in appointing as her chief secretary Sir William Cecil, whose course she had watched as he cautiously steered himself through the troubles of Edward's and

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Mary's reigns. She saw that his aims for the future of England were the same as her own, and divined that, in spite of his compromises, political and religious, she could rely on his loyalty to herself.

The results of Archbishop Cranmer's efforts towards Church settlement during Edward's reign had been swept away by Mary's revival of Roman Catholicism. But on one point the general sense of Anglicanism was definitely Protestant. The Eucharist was not a Mass: whether it was a communion in the Catholic sense or a memorial rite in the Zwinglian sense, whether the Church of England believed in the real presence or the real absence, remained as indeterminate as it still is. The rhyme, afterwards fathered on Elizabeth,

'Christ was the Word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what His words did make it,
That I believe and take it,'

seems to combine with admirable precision all possible views.

Elizabeth had none of her father's interest in theology. With her, religion was a political affair. Her prayers—like exemplary deathbeds and translations of the Psalms, prayers

were a fashion—read like polite and propitiatory minutes to another Power : they remind us of the parenthesis (refer to A. G.) in the draft of a later royal speech, when some confusion was caused by the fact that Almighty God and the Attorney General have the same initials. Her first step, on November 18, the day after Mary's death, was to forbid by proclamation ' the breach, alteration, or changes of any order or usage presently established.' She continued to go to Mass herself. But on Christmas Day she forbade the elevation of the Host in her private chapel, and walked out because her chaplain refused to obey. After this her gestures became definitely Protestant. During the coronation procession she kissed an English Bible, placing it on her breast, and when the Abbot of Westminster came to meet her with monks carrying candles, she exclaimed : ' Away with those torches. We can see well enough.' On Easter Day she received Communion in both kinds. The Bills of Supremacy and Uniformity, which had been meanwhile slowly passing through both Houses, became law by the end of April : Elizabeth had shown her wisdom in not hurrying matters unduly, or refusing compromise on minor points. She did not take Henry's title of Supreme Head of the

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Church, piously remarking that it belonged to Christ alone ; that of Supreme Governor in spiritual and ecclesiastical matters as well as temporal gave her all she wanted. The Mass was abolished, and the Prayer Book became the only lawful form of common worship. Tables were substituted for altars in the churches, and the saints on their walls were white-washed. The Church settlement was accomplished without public disturbance : recalcitrant bishops were placed in confinement, but there were no executions. The settlement was also good finance. Money would no longer go out of the country into the Pope's pocket, and Palavicino—

‘ Here lies Horatio Palavazene,
Who robb'd the Pope to lend the Queene,’

so runs his epitaph—who had been employed to collect Peter's Pence, put the proceeds at the Queen's disposal for a consideration.

A crucifix and candles soon reappeared in Elizabeth's own chapel. Both her public action in religious matters and her private practice varied with the diplomatic needs of the moment, with her foreign visitors, and possibly her whims : she did not take kindly to Puritanism in any form ; her own leanings

were towards a species of High Church agnosticism.

The other urgent matter was Scotland. When Mary Tudor died, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots and wife of the Dauphin, asserted her claim to the English crown by quartering the arms of England with her own : as great-niece of Henry VIII. she was next in succession : Elizabeth, she maintained, was illegitimate. She had secretly conveyed the crown of Scotland to the French king if she died without an heir : what more convenient for France than that their future queen should also wear the English crown? Mary's mother, Mary of Guise, was Queen Regent of Scotland, and French troops were supporting her in the struggle with the Lords of the Congregation, John Knox and his friends, who were trying to annihilate the Church of Rome in Scotland. The Scottish Protestants appealed to Elizabeth for help. She was in a dilemma : a monarch herself, she objected to helping rebels against their lawful queen : on the other hand, that queen was a pretender to her own throne. At first she helped them secretly : then she ordered Admiral Winter to the Forth to prevent French reinforcements, but he was to be responsible for his own actions. Luckily the

French fleet was driven back by storms. Elizabeth thereupon came out into the open, and made a league with the Congregation, not on religious grounds, but as a defence against French invasion. Europe was aghast at her presumption : she had, said Philip's ambassador, ' no friends, no council, no finances, no noblemen of conduct, no captains, no soldiers, and no reputation in the world.' Henry's resources were crippled by trouble with the Huguenots at home. This Elizabeth knew, and she sent troops to Scotland. The move was audacious, but entirely successful. By the Treaty of Edinburgh it was agreed that all but a handful of French troops should return to France, and that Mary and her husband, now King and Queen of France, should abandon their use of the English arms. Scotland was freed from the Pope ; the Mass and the monasteries were abolished. Elizabeth had counted for little less in the Scottish Protestant settlement than in the English : John Knox had been dependent after all on ' the monstrous regiment of women,' which, forgetting Deborah and not foreseeing Elizabeth, he had denounced too soon. Scotland was grateful, and Henry VIII.'s dream of a Britain united against all foreign foes had come true. But only for a

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moment. At the end of 1560 Francis II. died, and Mary, a girl of eighteen, became Dowager Queen of France. The control of her mother-in-law, Catherine de' Medici, was intolerable : she decided to return to Scotland. But she declined to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh until she had consulted her subjects, nor would she acknowledge Elizabeth's right to the throne of England. In August 1561 'the daughter of debate,' to use Elizabeth's own phrase, landed in Scotland, and the long duel began between the two Queens.

CHAPTER III

‘Yea, to satisfy you, I have already joined myself in Marriage to an Husband, namely, the Kingdom of England. And behold, said she, which I marvel ye have forgotten, the pledge of this my Wedlock and Marriage with my Kingdom. And therewith she withdrew the ring from her finger, and shewed it, wherewith at her Coronation she had in a set form of Words solemnly given herself in Marriage to her Kingdom. Here having made a pause, And do not, saith she, upbraid me with miserable lack of Children; for every one of you, and as many as are Englishmen, are Children and Kinsmen to me; of whom if God deprive me not, (which God forbid) I cannot without injury be accounted Barren. . . . And to me it shall be a full satisfaction, both for the memorial of my Name, and for my Glory also, if, when I shall let my last breath, it be engraven upon my Marble Tomb : Here lieth Elizabeth, which Reigned a Virgin, and died a Virgin.’

THE Church Settlement and the situation in Scotland were important matters enough, but from the moment of Elizabeth’s accession another question had agitated both England and Europe, Whom would she marry? Her own people were tired of foreigners, and so, she let it be understood, was she. The claims of the English nobility were canvassed, but not one of them would have been generally acceptable.

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Her foreign suitors were many. England was a rich dowry, and Elizabeth was young, personable, and evidently very intelligent. The Soldier of the Church was much perturbed. He had taken Elizabeth's part against Mary's advisers, and now her friendship was more important than ever. But he must look after his own kingdom, and it would be difficult to control England from Spain ; he was well aware that the English hated him. And Elizabeth herself ! She might be younger and prettier than Mary, but she was far less docile. Yet a Protestant England would be deplorable, an Anglo-French alliance a disaster. He reluctantly made up his mind to render a service to God and to Spain by marrying her himself, that is, if she would consent to become a good Catholic, a condition she had never fulfilled in Mary's reign. He instructed his ambassador, the Count de Feria, to move delicately in the matter. Elizabeth protested that she was a heretic, and she was soon acting on her words. Philip, much relieved, arranged a marriage with the French princess. Elizabeth was amused by the news at first : she, writes Feria, ' began to say she had heard your Majesty was married, smiling, saying your name was a fortunate one, and now and then giving little sighs

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which bordered upon laughter.' Then she pretended that Philip had thrown her over, as she had given him no definite answer : he could not have been much in love if he would not wait for four months : and, by the end of the interview, she seemed very much annoyed. Elizabeth did not regret Philip, but a Franco-Spanish alliance was disconcerting.

Part of Elizabeth's reply to a deputation from the Commons stands at the head of this chapter. She also assured them that, should she decide to marry, her choice would be dictated by the good of the Commonwealth, but that otherwise the question of a successor might safely be left to the direction of God. 'For Queen Elizabeth,' says Bacon, 'being a Prince of extreme caution, and yet one that loved admiration above safety, and knowing the declaration of a successor mought in point of safety be disputable, but in point of admiration and respect assuredly to her disadvantage, had from the beginning set it down for a maxim of estate to impose a silence touching succession.' In Mary's days any marriage proposed for her would have meant exile, with the probable loss of the succession. Now a husband, foreign or English, would only come between herself and her people. She had no desire to give up her

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independence as Mary had done, and, as already hinted, the Seymour incident had probably given her a distaste for marriage. But Elizabeth realised to the full the political importance of her value in the marriage market, and she continued to encourage the hopes of suitors for her own purposes. This game she enjoyed, and she played it with admirable skill. The one gain would have been the settlement of the succession, and she had reason to doubt whether she could bear children. But, had she admitted the improbability of a fruitful marriage, it would have been less easy to shelve the question of a successor. Once, perhaps, she betrayed herself to her ladies : 'The Queen of Scots is mother of a fair son, and I am but a barren stock.' Some of her Council were alarmed lest she should marry Northumberland's son, the handsome Lord Robert Dudley, Master of her Horse. It was an old friendship, dating from the time when both were prisoners in the Tower, possibly even earlier at Edward's Court. During the long years at Woodstock and Hatfield, Elizabeth had been starved of youthful companionship : Dudley was a welcome relaxation from the sober Cecil. Her behaviour gave rise to endless gossip and scandal. She flirted with him loudly and openly,

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tickled his neck when she created him Earl of Leicester, and throughout his life showed more real affection for him than for any one else. Had she not been Queen, it is likely enough that she would have married him, when his love match with Amy Robsart had come to its tragic and mysterious end. But she never forgot that he was her subject : when he presumed on her favour he was at once put in his place.

In the parlous condition of the national finances economy was essential : Elizabeth showed her sound business instincts from the first. She cut down her household to about a third of what Mary's had been, a notable step on the part of a young Queen, vain, fond of jewels and fine clothes, and eager to enjoy the pleasures and magnificence of her position. But an elaborate and miscellaneous establishment remained, consisting of numberless functionaries concerned with the affairs and amusements of the household, besides the Guard, and the band of Gentlemen Pensioners, who attended the Queen when she went abroad, the ladies of the Bedchamber, of the Privy Chamber, and the Maids of Honour, who walked with the Queen, played, sang, read, and danced to her. The Privy Council met daily at Court.

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The Presence Chamber was thronged with nobles and gentlemen, waiting for a glimpse of her Majesty, or a word as she passed through. Beyond it was the Privy Chamber, where the Queen sat when she came from her own apartments, or was not walking in the Privy Garden.

From the windows of Whitehall she could see the palaces of her nobility stretching along the river-side from Charing Cross to the Temple, and, on bright days, the still silver Thames alive with watermen's wherries and the gilded barges of city companies and nobles, for the river was the great highway of the capital, where the citizens could enjoy the sight of their Queen herself, proceeding in state to visit her Archbishop at Lambeth, or to take the air at Greenwich or Chelsea. From Westminster, lying round the Hall and the Abbey, and just pushing out into the country as far as the end of Tothill Street, the highway to London ran through the courtyard of the palace under two gate-houses. At the top of the ascent, where is now Trafalgar Square, stood the royal mews, and between Charing Cross and the Temple lay the busy Strand. At Temple Bar began the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor, chief magistrate of a swarming population of nearly half a million, tightly

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packed in narrow lanes of overhanging, half-timbered houses, who exercised a more doubtful authority over the bear-gardens, play-houses and vagabond population of the Surrey side. Crowning the highest hill rose the Church of St. Paul, which, before the fire of 1561, had boasted the highest spire in the world. East of the City stood the fortress of the Conqueror ; beyond it the marshes and the crowded masts of the river below-bridge to Deptford, where Hawkins built the ships, which were the safeguard of the Queen's realm.

The Court usually spent the winter at Whitehall, moving to Hampton, Greenwich or Richmond, for the early spring. The summer was spent at Whitehall again, but when the dust and odour of Westminster began to assail the Queen's delicate senses, the Court retired to one of the country palaces—Nonsuch in Surrey was a favourite—to prepare for the annual Progress. These Progresses, by which in the successive years of her reign the Queen journeyed through the counties south of the Trent, with the exception of the extreme west, were at once excellent policy, and a source of enjoyment to herself.

She rode, or was borne in her litter, surrounded by her ladies and her courtiers, lively

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and merry, interested in every detail, endearing herself to the common people by her reception of their flowers and their suits, and her ready sympathy with their troubles. When a cottage was damaged by fireworks she sent for the old man and woman, comforted them, and recompensed them for their losses. She heard that the Mayor of Coventry had killed a man who beat off the Mayor's greyhounds to save his little spaniel, and ordered that the Mayor should be deposed forthwith. And she could jest with them at her own expense : a carter coming to Windsor to remove some of the Queen's wardrobe, told for the third time that the order was cancelled, ' clapping his hand on his thigh cried out, " Now I see that the Queen is a woman as well as my wife." ' These words being overheard by her Majesty, who then stood at the window, she said, " What a villain is this ! " and so sends him three angels to stop his mouth.' During her annual Progresses she always welcomed the crowds who came to see her, and watched the dances which were their share of her entertainment. Her personality became better known to her people than that of any of her predecessors : her jokes and her sympathy and her oaths created a legend.

But her visits were a strain on the resources

of the nobility and gentry, who dared not refuse the honour. One of her hosts writes :

‘The Queen visited my house at Mitcham, and supped and lodged there, and dined there next day. I presented her with a gown of cloth of silver richly embroidered ; a black net-work mantle with pure gold ; a taffeta hat, white, with several flowers, and a jewel of gold set therein with rubies and diamonds. Her Majesty removed from my house after dinner the 13th of September to Nonsuch, with exceeding good contentment ; which entertainment of her Majesty, with the former disappointment, amounted to £700 sterling, besides mine own provisions, and what was sent unto me by my friends.’

A long stay like that at Kenilworth, with daily feasting and diverse masques, was ruinous indeed. These masques, in which the Queen figured as the embodiment of perfect beauty, virtue and justice, and similar flatteries, such as the celebration of St. Elizabeth’s Day—the saint who literally inflamed a gallant with a desire for the holy life—affected the ordinary atmosphere of daily life at Court, and were in part responsible for the courtly legend of Elizabeth’s immortal charm, a convention which endured until the end of her life. Bacon, writing of ‘those lighter points of character—as that she allowed herself to be wooed and courted, and even to have love made to her ; and liked

it ; and continued it beyond the natural age for such vanities,' adds that these things 'are much like the accounts we find in romances, of the Queen in the blessed islands, and her court and institutions, who allows of amorous admiration but prohibits desire.' So Raleigh, lamenting from the Tower that he was deprived of the sight of a Queen verging on sixty :

'I that was wont to behold her riding like Alexander, hunting like Diana, walking like Venus, the gentle wind blowing her fair hair about her pure cheeks, like a nymph ; sometimes sitting in the shade like a goddess ; sometimes singing like an angel ; sometimes playing like Orpheus.'

Elizabeth's Progresses also made her known to the scholars of the nation. In the summer of 1564 she had a great reception at Cambridge, where she stayed at King's College, praising the beauty of the chapel above all other within her realm. When the staves were delivered to her Majesty by Cecil, the Chancellor of the University, who was suffering from a sore leg, she gaily remarked that 'although the Chancellor did halt, yet she trusted that Justice did not halt.' She was entertained with learned orations and disputations by day and dramatic performances at night, but nothing

quelled her spirits. In the middle of a sermon at King's, she sent one messenger to tell the preacher to put on his cap, and at the end, before he could get out of the pulpit, another arrived to inform him that it was the first sermon the Queen had heard in Latin, and she thought she should never hear a better. Her coy reception of the request for a speech charmed her male audience: she would not mind if English had been allowed, but Latin, no! the Chancellor was 'the Queen's mouth,' and he must speak for her. Further pressed, she delivered a neat little oration with an appropriate quotation from Demosthenes. It was received with rapturous shouts of 'Vivat Regina!' 'Taceat Regina,' said she, and wished that 'all they that heard her oration had drunk of the flood of Lethe.'

Dudley, now Earl of Leicester, was Chancellor of the University when the Queen visited Oxford two years later. A less wise administrator than Cecil at Cambridge, though a more appreciative patron of the Arts, he was an unrivalled organiser of splendid shows. The programme was similar to that at Cambridge, the Queen being specially delighted with a performance of *Palamon and Arcyte*, when the undergraduates, taken in by a cry of hounds, stood in

the windows, shouting, 'Now, now!—there, there!—he's caught, he's caught!' She called out merrily: 'O, excellent! those boys, in very troth, are ready to leap out of the windows, to follow the hounds.' The boys were said to have been inspired by her visit to pursue their studies with unwonted vigour.

CHAPTER IV

'She could not put to death the bird that
had flown to her for succour from the hawk.'

It was well that Elizabeth during these first critical years should exhibit herself to her people in all her radiance, winning their allegiance and their love, since a dark cloud of intrigue and disaffection was spreading at Court. It was well also that she was gradually establishing a better understanding with France. On her accession she had shown excellent judgment in relinquishing the attempt to regain Calais, lost by Mary, yet in 1562 she openly supported the Huguenots, naming its restoration as her price. But Catherine de' Medici patched up a peace with her Protestant subjects, and Elizabeth found herself in one of those traps which she was afterwards so successful in avoiding. The surrender of Havre terminated her first and last war with France. It was a useful experience.

Catherine and Elizabeth were united in their opposition to Mary Stuart's marrying Don

Carlos, Philip's son : an alliance between Scotland and Spain would have suited neither of them. In the flush of gratitude for Elizabeth's intervention the Scots had offered to ignore Mary's rights and unite the Scottish and English crowns, but they had been affronted by Elizabeth's rejection of their candidate for her hand, the lunatic Earl of Arran. On her arrival in Scotland, Mary found the Calvinists as ready with their allegiance as the Catholics. The two Queens exchanged weekly letters of a friendly nature, until Elizabeth discovered that Mary was proposing to marry the Archduke Charles, one of the strings to her own bow, which she found it convenient to finger when her relations with Philip of Spain needed a refresher. The correspondence became acrimonious, and Mary, alarmed at a possible breach, sent Sir James Melville to propitiate her. In spite of Elizabeth's affectionate speeches, Mary's ambassador felt that 'there was neither plain dealing, nor upright meaning ; but great dissimulation, emulation and fear' of his mistress's rivalry. She boasted of her wardrobe, and wore a different costume each day to captivate him. 'One day she had the English weed, another the French, and another the Italian, and so forth. She asked me

which of them became her best. I answered, In my judgment, the Italian dress : which answer I found pleased her well ; for she delighted to show her golden-coloured hair, wearing a caul and bonnet as they do in Italy. Her hair was more reddish than yellow, curled in appearance naturally. She desired to know of me, what colour of hair was reputed best ; and whether my Queen's hair or hers was best ; and which of the two was fairest. I answered, The fairness of them both was not their worst faults. But she was earnest with me to declare which of them I judged fairest. I said, She was the fairest Queen in England, and mine the fairest Queen in Scotland. Yet she appeared earnest. I answered, They were both the fairest ladies in their countries ; that her Majesty was whiter, but my Queen was very lovesome. She inquired which of them was of highest stature. I said, My Queen. Then, saith she, she is too high ; for I myself am neither too high nor too low. Then she asked what kind of exercises she used. I answered, That when I received my dispatch, the Queen was lately come from the Highland hunting : that when her more serious affairs permitted, she was taken up with reading of histories : that sometimes she recreated herself in playing

upon the lute and virginals. She speired gin she played well. I said, reasonably for a Queen.' Elizabeth took care that Melville should hear her play, as though by accident, and he admitted Mary's inferiority as a musician. Then he must put off his journey to see her dance. Did she or his Queen dance best? 'I answered, The Queen danced not so high, and disposedly as she did.' There is something delightfully childish about Elizabeth's vanity, but it betrayed a real anxiety. In her struggle with Mary Tudor all the personal advantages had been on her side : now her rival had youth at least. She expressed a great desire to see Mary, and Melville suggested that he should take her secretly back with him to Scotland, dressed as his page. 'She appeared to like that kind of language, only answered it with a sigh, saying, "Alas ! if I might do it thus."'

The problem of the Widow's remarriage was as agitating as that of the Virgin's marriage. Cecil had an ingenious idea. Why not rid himself and England of his rival, Robert Dudley, with his dangerous pretensions to Elizabeth's own hand, and present Mary with a Protestant husband of whose loyalty to herself Elizabeth would have no doubts. Elizabeth, for the moment at least, agreed to the graceful sacrifice,



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and offered Mary him whom she esteemed 'as her brother and best friend, whom she would have herself married, had she ever minded to have taken a husband.' Such a match, she said, would remove all her fear of usurpation, 'being assured that he was so loving and trusty, that he would never permit any such thing to be attempted during her time.' It was as a step to the Scottish throne that she created him Earl of Leicester. Mary refused with scorn, and settled matters out of hand by marrying the handsome degenerate, Darnley, a great-nephew of Henry VIII., to the satisfaction of Philip and the English Catholics. Elizabeth remarked over a game of chess that even a pawn, Darnley, might checkmate her. So thought Mary. She had recovered the initiative, and was promising the Pope and Philip a Catholic Scotland, intriguing with English nobles, and arrogantly demanding that she should be declared Elizabeth's successor by Act of Parliament. Elizabeth could only wait for her next move. Meanwhile she met the situation, as best she could, by telling the Spanish ambassador that the flock of which she was Supreme Governor differed from other Catholics only in matters of small importance, implying that he would soon see even these amended, by

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dangling her hand once more before the eyes of the Archduke Charles, and by writing affectionate letters to Philip. She refused to support the Scottish Protestants, partly lest Mary should secure French help, partly from an innate dislike of rebels. In June 1566 Mary strengthened her position and her English claims by providing her own successor. Elizabeth consented to be godmother, and sent a golden font, which, as she cheerfully suggested, might be too small for James, but would do for the next child, if it could be christened before it outgrew the font.

The only satisfactory result from the Darnley marriage was James. Riccio's murder was followed by Darnley's, by Mary's remarriage with Bothwell, and the consequent revolution in Scotland. Fate or Mary had played into Elizabeth's hands. Mary was imprisoned on Lochleven, forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son, and to nominate her half-brother, Lord James Stuart, Earl of Moray, as Regent. Catherine, Philip and the Pope were scandalised—Bothwell, to crown all, was a Protestant—and his Holiness could not make up his mind which of the two Queens, Mary or Elizabeth, was the better or the worse. Elizabeth, on the contrary, in spite of opposition from her Council, expressed the strongest sympathy :

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Mary would have been executed at once, if she had sent English troops to the rescue, as she threatened. Had Elizabeth been Catherine we might suspect that this was the consummation she desired, but, though 'the Florentine' was one of her favourite soubriquets, her intrigues were not of the Italian pattern. Ten months later Mary evaded her gaolers, and, encouraged by the gift of a ring during her imprisonment and affectionate congratulations on her escape, fled across the border. She arrived with no wardrobe but the clothes on her back, and Elizabeth's first response to her needs was ominous—two torn shifts, two pieces of black velvet, and two pair of shoes. Did she remember her own childish fall from great estate, and intend that Mary's should be marked by a like destitution? Although she refused to recognise the Regent's government, she had already bought from him Mary's pearls, to which he had at least as little right. It was one thing to send rings and sympathy to the pathetic prisoner of Lochleven, another to force a Catholic Queen back on the country whose Protestantism had been one of her own successes, a Catholic, moreover, who had been calling herself Queen of England not long before. But Mary could not be allowed her

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alternative of a safe passage to France. She had never ratified the Treaty of Edinburgh—a point on which Elizabeth constantly harped—and might return to Scotland at the head of French troops. She must be kept in an honourable captivity until Elizabeth could decide on her course of action. Mary's alleged share in the Darnley murder was a happy excuse for delay. Her character must be cleared before Elizabeth could do anything further for her. But a sovereign was not subject to law, and it was against Elizabeth's principles to bring her before a legal tribunal. A Commission of Inquiry was appointed, Moray was required, in the first instance, to justify his rebellion. He came armed with the famous Casket Letters, which, if authentic, proved Mary's guilt without a doubt. The contents of the Casket were not made public, and the commission dragged on to an indefinite conclusion. Elizabeth allowed Moray and his colleagues to return to Scotland with honour unimpaired, but said they had produced nothing 'whereby the Queen of England should conceive or take any evil opinion of the Queen, her good sister, for anything yet seen.' Yet she kept her good sister in prison, closely guarded, while she was feeling her way toward a solution of the problem. Elizabeth,

possibly, never believed in Mary's guilt, and, like her father, she had always been disposed to regard Scotland as an English province. She now indulged in the dream that Mary, restored by her grace, should rule more as daughter than as a sister queen, while the baby James was to be brought up in England under her own eye, and turned out a proper successor to both crowns. She proposed various conditions to ensure these happy results, among them one which John Knox must have thought strangely unworthy of Deborah, that the Scottish Church should conform to the English Act of Uniformity. Elizabeth's Council meanwhile was divided, the nobles and courtiers intriguing with Mary, while Cecil and his adherents were furtively supporting the Regent. The two parties were ready to agree that Mary should be released if she would marry the Duke of Norfolk, the first English subject and then ostensibly a Protestant. Elizabeth wished to keep her tied to the fugitive Bothwell, and obstinately opposed a scheme which savoured of the old plot that she should herself marry the Earl of Devonshire and take her sister's crown. Cecil's acquiescence had only been a feint to gain time. It was in the North, still a Catholic stronghold, that the storm burst. The old feudal feeling

had not been exchanged for the new loyalty to the reigning monarch : in Northumberland, it was said, they knew no Prince but a Percy. The legend of Elizabeth had no substance—she never went, be it remembered, north of the Trent—but Mary had created a romance. The northern nobles and gentry had welcomed her from the first, and, as her honourable detention hardened into a real captivity, their devotion to her cause ripened to conspiracy. In the autumn of 1569, encouraged by promises of help from Spain, they rose under the leadership of the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, intending to deliver Mary from her prison at Tutbury. She was hastily sent south to Coventry, and the ill-organised troops retreated before Elizabeth's advancing army. Three months later a more formidable rising under Leonard Dacre was also quelled. Rebels of property, who failed to escape to Scotland or the Netherlands, were tried before execution, that the Crown might assert a legal right to their lands and goods. Elizabeth was relentless in her vengeance : by her own express and repeated command six or seven hundred of the 'meaner sort,' who had only followed their natural leaders, were hanged by martial law on the village greens. This savagery, of which

there is other example in her reign, shows how great her fear had been. She was determined to destroy the old feudal loyalties which had endangered her own supremacy. These were not her people : in the Midlands or the South she would have been more merciful. Her relief breaks out in a grateful letter to her cousin, Lord Hunsdon, the Governor of Berwick, who had routed Dacre. Hunsdon was one of her main bulwarks, staunch, honest—his Latin and his diplomacy, said one of the young Court wits, were equally bad—independent, ‘ a man just to his prince and firm to his friends and servants.’ Elizabeth gave him various onerous posts, and took more plain speech in less bad part from him than from any other of her ministers.

The Queen had had, in truth, a narrow escape from a more serious and extensive rebellion. The insurrectionaries in the North had acted from different motives : many of them were not disloyal at heart but wanted to force a declaration of Mary’s succession : a few would have had Mary at once for Queen, while their humble retainers believed themselves to be fighting in a crusade for the old faith. English Catholics as a whole had been troubled by doubts whether they ought to rebel against a

queen who had not been excommunicated. Now the Pope set their scruples at rest. Early in 1570 he issued a Bull excommunicating 'the servant of iniquity,' and quashing her right to the English throne. A copy was affixed to the Bishop of London's door in May by John Felton, who was executed for high treason.

The Bull cleared the air : English Catholics had now the definite choice between loyalty and treason. The conspiracy hatched by the Pope's agent, Ridolphi, was matured. The only question was between a foreign invasion supported by a general rising of English Catholics, for which Ridolphi conceived himself to have prepared the way, and the assassination of Elizabeth, a simpler and cheaper plan. The Pope pronounced Mary's marriage to Bothwell invalid. Norfolk declared himself a Catholic : all was in train for their marriage and accession to the throne. But Cecil had not been sleeping. The plot was discovered by his ubiquitous agents. Norfolk was arrested, tried by his peers, and condemned to death for high treason. Elizabeth hesitated. When first she became Queen her prayer had been 'that God would give her grace to govern with clemency, and without bloodshed, keeping her hands stainless.' True that her hands were now dyed red

with the blood of the northern peasants ; but Norfolk's execution appealed to her limited and sluggish imagination : he was the first nobleman in England, and her cousin. She signed the order and revoked it three or four times. There is a curious note of hers referring to the postponement of another execution, which shows that she distrusted her impulses :

‘ My Lord, methinks that I am more beholden to the hinder part of my head than well dare trust the forward side of the same, and therefore sent to the Lieutenant and the secretary, as you know best, the order to defer this execution till they hear further.’

But her second thoughts were frustrated. Mary had been deeply implicated in the conspiracy, and Parliament brought in a Bill of Attainder against her. Elizabeth refused to sanction it : as a compromise she sacrificed Norfolk to save Mary.

The failure of the Northern Rising had broken, once and for all, the power of the old nobility. From Berwick to Land's End the monarchy was consolidated and supreme. It had been foretold that the thirteenth year of Elizabeth's reign would be the fatal last. Now the crisis was past : the completion of this perilous year was celebrated in November by general rejoicing. It had proved to be not

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the end but the beginning of the true Elizabethan Age. Her subjects, Catholic as well as Protestant, knew that the Queen was, in the words of the young Philip Sidney, the brand of Meleager : their prosperity hung on her life : her death would mean civil war.

CHAPTER V

'In so rare a government when our neighbour's
fire giveth us light to see our quietness.'

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

DURING these critical years the character of Elizabeth's Council had completely changed. The old nobility had vanished, dead or exiled, and the members were, with but one or two exceptions, Tudor creations, or like Cecil, now Lord Burghley, men of no birth : with the consolidation of the monarchy the middle class had risen to power. It was not a homogeneous body : there would be intrigues, dissensions and jealousies, but never again disloyalty and the warring of irreconcilable elements. Elizabeth had found a team she could drive, and she did not recline idly in her gilded chariot as the mere figure-head of the State and the Church. 'Even those whom she herself raised to honour,' writes Bacon, 'she so kept in hand and mingled with one another, that while she infused into each the greatest solicitude to please her she was herself ever her own mistress.' In general Burghley's aims were most in harmony with

her own, but advocates of a less cautious policy such as Walsingham and Leicester had their turn. She was not an easy mistress. 'More than a man, and (in troth) sometime less than a woman,' as Burghley's son, Sir Robert Cecil, wrote after her death, she combined the masterfulness of her father with indecisions and vacillations even in excess of those which men expected of a woman. Her great defect was a lack of constructive imagination. She was apt, as she herself says, to let 'the forward part' of her head take charge, without working out the consequences: hence the changes of front so bewildering to her councillors. Her mind was extraordinarily concrete: she scarcely seemed to distinguish between thought and action, but would try out an idea by taking some step or giving some order, without realising that, in the eyes of others, she had bound herself to a certain course. Often, on the other hand, her apparent vacillations were dictated by a new feature in the political situation, but her rapid transitions, frequently accompanied by emotional outbursts, masked a sound intuitive judgment. Her vanity—or was it her unwillingness to recognise any departure from the princely ideal which, from the outset of her reign, she had consistently set herself to follow?

—made her saddle her advisers with the responsibility for diplomatic failures, while she claimed the merit for success. Her godson, Sir John Harington, describes her way with her ministers, in its weakness and in its strength :

‘ Her wisest men and best councillors were often sore troubled to know her will in matters of state : so covertly did she pass her judgment, as seemed to leave all to their discreet management ; and, when the business did turn to better advantages, she did most cunningly commit the good issue to her own honour and understanding ; but, when ought fell out contrary to her will and intent, the council were in great straights to defend their own acting and not blemish the Queen’s good judgment. Herein her wise men did oft lack more wisdom ; and the Lord Treasurer¹ would oft shed a plenty of tears on any miscarriage, well knowing the difficult part was, not so much to mend the matter itself, as his mistress’s humour : and yet he did most share her favour and good will ; and to his opinion she would oft-time submit her own pleasure in great matters. She did keep him till late at night, in discoursing alone, and then call out another at his departure, and try the depth of all around her sometime. Walsingham had his turn, and each displayed their wit in private.

‘ On the morrow, every one did come forth in her presence and discourse at large ; and, if any had dissembled with her or stood not well to her advising before, she did not let it go unheeded, and

¹ Burghley.

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sometimes not unpunished. Sir Christopher Hatton was wont to say, "The Queen did fish for men's souls, and had so sweet a bait, that no one could escape her network." In truth, I am sure her speech was such, as none could refuse to take delight in, when frowardness did not stand in the way. I have seen her smile, sooth, with great semblance of good liking to all around, and cause every one to open his most inward thought to her ; when, on a sudden, she would ponder in private on what had passed, write down all their opinions, draw them out as occasion required, and sometime disprove to their faces what had been delivered a month before. Hence she knew every one's part, and by thus *fishing*, as Hatton said, she caught many poor fish, who little knew what snare was laid for them."

Elizabeth's feminine guile was, no doubt, very trying to the victims, and one can imagine their consternation when they compared notes on escaping from the nets ; but, a woman alone in a world of men, she must be Queen, or she would be nothing. Hitherto Elizabeth's foreign policy had been a fortuitous affair, determined by her own internal embarrassments. Now that Scotland was out of action and she had consolidated her own position at home, she set herself deliberately to maintain the balance of power abroad, that England might have a period of peace in which to become a great and united people. From this

ideal she never allowed herself to be deflected by dreams of conquest and expansion, or by religious sympathies. Any aggression in either direction was incidental, and subserved this, her main purpose. She encouraged religious toleration among the subjects of others—‘What does it matter to your Majesty,’ she asked the Soldier of the Church, when he was coercing his Protestant subjects in the Netherlands, ‘if they go to the devil in their own way?’—although at home she insisted on outward conformity, recognising that the very idea of toleration was premature, and must lead to civil war, as it had done in France. She made a gesture of disapproval, as became a Protestant queen, after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, putting her Court into mourning, but she did not allow the incident to disturb her relations with France: she consented to be godmother to the royal baby, and another little gold font was prepared as her gift. English help to the Huguenots, after the lesson at Havre, was always unofficial: so long as Elizabeth could escape responsibility for French embarrassments they were a useful factor in the situation.

A new problem had arisen. The Netherland Protestants, supported by the more courageous and patriotic Catholics, were trying to

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free themselves from the Spanish yoke : in 1572 they made a beginning with the capture of Brill and Flushing. William of Orange asked Elizabeth for help, and skilfully forced her sympathies by appealing also to France. A French Netherlands would have suited her even less than a Spanish : it was too convenient a base for operations across the Channel. She sent a little money from time to time, and promised troops, who were never despatched : while Philip was kept on tenterhooks he would not attempt any enterprise against England. But Elizabeth did not intend to risk a breach with Spain, and, when Holland and Zealand had achieved a precarious independence, she refused the suzerainty against the advice of the forward party on her Council.

Orange was disappointed by the Queen of England, but he was not without help from her people. The young Englishman of the day was athirst for 'good wars' : gentlemen at large trooped across the Channel with followers equipped at their own expense. It was a safe outlet for hot blood : the Queen did not want their services then ; when she did, men like John Norris and Roger Williams were experienced soldiers, ready to her hand.

Her seamen were also in training for the

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day when she would need them. In Mary's reign piracy had become a Protestant habit : clergy and scholars fled to the Continent, but the young bloods infested the Channel, capturing ships and spoil. Mary issued proclamations in vain : Elizabeth repeated them, but only for appearance sake. The sea-rovers conveniently distracted the attention of France by strengthening the hands of the Huguenots, and hampered Spanish intercourse with the Netherlands. Once, indeed, Elizabeth herself electrified Europe in the character of arch-pirate—Spanish ships containing £150,000, arrears of pay due to Philip's army in the Netherlands, were driven into English ports by Huguenot privateers. She seized the money, impudently claiming that she was entitled to borrow it for her own purposes, as she had saved it from the French.

Toward trade with the Spanish colonies, which, in violation of ancient treaties, Philip chose to regard as contraband, toward exploration and conquest in the Indies, her attitude was the same. She would not countenance the expeditions of Hawkins and Drake as part of the national programme : young courtiers of note were forbidden to take part in their adventures." If they failed they might be hanged

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without protest from Whitehall, if they succeeded they were safe. When 'the master thief of the unknown world' sailed over Plymouth bar, with a million and a half of gold and jewels in his hold, his first question to the fisherman he hailed was whether the Queen's Majesty was alive and in good health, and six months later she knighted him on the deck of the *Golden Hind*. She must always be able to disclaim responsibility, or allege that their depredations were only a retaliation for Spanish provocation. Nothing must disturb her own pose as Philip's affectionate sister-in-law. But she was equally ready to disclaim responsibility altogether, to argue that the depredations of her seamen were lawful reprisals, and to share the swag : she became a secret shareholder in their enterprises, and a keen participator in the profits. And—an equivocal extension of the doctrine that English merchant ships needed armed protection—she began to lend ships of war as escorts. But it may be doubted whether she ever realised what an instrument of policy her ship-builders and sea-captains had forged, if she chose to use it. At forty-five she was a hardened old schemer, and she held to the ways which had served her purpose so well.

She had pulled the strings of her favourite

puppet, the Archduke Charles, till he grew weary of setting to partners, and each of Catherine de' Medici's elder sons had engaged her attention in turn. In 1572 she had embarked on the most complex of her matrimonial intrigues with the youngest, the Duke of Alençon (afterwards Anjou), an unattractive pock-marked boy, twenty-one years her junior. By 1580 her maidenly reluctance had been so far overcome that French commissioners were in London to settle the marriage treaty. It is a dazzling display of Elizabeth's peculiar genius and abundant vitality. Superficially she appears a capricious elderly coquette, consumed with vanity, and utterly incapable of making up her mind. But any one who will carefully compare the ups and downs of the courtship with a time-table of political events in Spain, France, Scotland and the Netherlands, and consider the effect, or possible effect, on England, will realise that none of her vacillations or delays lacked motive. Her contemporaries had not this retrospective advantage, and only another woman could hope to follow the bewildering intricacy of her moves : Catherine de' Medici was probably seldom at fault. Her Council, mere men, were dazed. Even Sir Christopher Hatton, perhaps the most subtle

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observer and interpreter of Elizabeth's moods, was deceived by her amorous fervour during one of her visits from her Frog Prince and thought that she intended to marry him. Again and again when negotiations seemed to have reached the final stage she found some excuse for delay—she was not really sure whether her people approved, or she did not like the way her future brother-in-law, the French King, was treating his Protestant subjects. Once her histrionic powers carried her well beyond the limits of fair play. The English Puritans regarded the marriage as a menace to Protestantism. John Stubbs wrote a pamphlet giving expression to their views, and Elizabeth, with a savagery which recalls her dealings with the northern peasants, insisted on his punishment in the teeth of her legal advisers, and his right hand was struck off.

The courtship was cut short by Anjou's death in 1583, and the despairing maiden of fifty wrote to her prospective mother-in-law that her only consolation lay in the hope of meeting her lover again in heaven. As mourning for him she wore black velvet, originally a gift from Catherine, fastened by a large black spider brooch.

CHAPTER VI

‘However, notwithstanding all these blemishes, Queen Elizabeth stands upon record as a wise and politic princess, for delivering her Kingdom from the difficulties in which it was involved at her accession, for preserving the Protestant reformation against the potent attempts of the Pope, the Emperor, and King of Spain abroad, and the Queen of Scots and her Popish subjects at home. . . . She was the glory of the age in which she lived, and will be the admiration of posterity.’

NEAL'S History of the Puritans.

ELIZABETH was not interested in religion. Conformity of action she expected and required, but uniformity of belief was no part of the national programme. She protested—and for the greater part of her reign protested with truth—that she made no windows into men's souls. Politically she had to avoid a Catholic reaction, which would imperil the national security, and a Presbyterian reformation, which would abolish the Royal Supremacy. The Church which she gave her people was intended to include as many and exclude as few as possible. But on the balance it was more important to bring Catholics into the Church than to

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keep Protestants from leaving it. And, apart from a few Anabaptists, no Protestant wished to leave the Church. They wished to remodel it in a direction which would have made it harder for Catholics to conform. To a Catholic, the Settlement, without Pope or Mass, was heretical. To an Ultra-Protestant, the Anglican establishment with its Vestments and Bishops was unscriptural. But to the bulk of the people it was satisfactory. They felt that peace was better than principle, and as usual Elizabeth felt with them.

Parliament was more Protestant than the Queen, and the Commons would have left the mode of Church government under the Queen as Supreme Governor an open question. Very early in the reign we see the beginnings of that alliance between the Protestant gentry and Puritan clergy which created the Parliamentary opposition of Stuart times. But, so long as there was any danger from the Catholic side, the Protestant sections were kept together in an enforced truce. The Papal Bull of 1572 made a clear line of division between loyal Protestants and Catholic traitors, and the opportunity was given to win for the Establishment the willing support of the younger and more active clergy. It was lost, and the incident is significant of the

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limitations of Elizabeth's mind and the obstinacy of her temper, when once her mind was made up.

With the approval of many of the bishops, the clergy had formed societies, called Prophesyings, for discussions and prayer and the training of preachers. The Queen could not realise that an educated clergy and interested congregations were essential to the progress and vitality of a national Church. She did not like unfettered discourse, and she scented danger. Parker was ordered to put down the Prophesyings. Some of the Privy Council intervened to countermand the Archbishop's directions. Grindal, who succeeded Parker, chose the wiser course of issuing regulations for the conduct of these societies. The Queen persisted in her objections : Grindal was sequestered from his functions, the Prophesyings were brought to an end by royal injunction, and congregations were left once more to the unimpeachable orthodoxy of the Book of Homilies. It was a mistake for which her successors had to pay.

Even more serious in its consequences was the choice of Whitgift to follow Grindal in 1583. One of his chief virtues in Elizabeth's eyes was his celibacy. Her abnormal dislike of marriage

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extended to her clergy : she would not allow the statute forbidding their marriage, which was in force during Mary's reign, to be repealed, and therefore their wives and children remained in an invidious position. To poor Mrs. Parker, wife of a former Archbishop, who had entertained her lavishly at Lambeth, she denied the titles due either to a married woman or to a respectable spinster : '*Madam* I may not call you ; *Mistress* I am loth to call you ; but however I thank you for your good cheer.'

In 1586 Whitgift had secured a Star Chamber decree forbidding any printer to set up a manuscript which had not been licensed by himself or the Bishop of London. But Episcopal control of the press did not prevent a burst of scurrilous pamphlets in the Puritan interest, which began in the autumn of 1588. These bore the signature of Martin Marprelate, and were answered in equally unmeasured language by Whitgift's adherents, clerical and lay. The identity, or identities, of Martin were never revealed, but in the course of the controversy a number of Puritans were convicted of seditious libel and executed.

As a means of discovering and rooting out heretics, Whitgift had persuaded the Queen to

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delegate her powers as Supreme Governor of the Church to a High Commission, consisting of twelve bishops and thirty-two laymen. The Commission was empowered to administer an oath *ex officio* to any one it chose, who was then required to answer any questions, silence being taken as a confession of guilt. Even that staunch churchman, Lord Burghley, was aghast at its proceedings, 'as rather a device to seek for offenders than to reform any,' and represented to Whitgift that 'the inquisitions of Spain use not so many questions to comprehend and to entrap their preys.' But Elizabeth had yielded to the influence of her little black husband : his un-English procedure of forcing men to convict themselves undermined her tolerant policy of making no windows into their souls. He may well have said to her, like Lord Palmerston to a later queen, that the function of bishops in the Church was the same as that of generals in the army : Elizabeth certainly regarded herself as commander-in-chief with Whitgift as her responsible lieutenant. But between them they forced an issue which, within the lifetime of some then living, was to end in civil war.

On the other hand, if a large body had been permanently alienated from the Establishment,

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Elizabeth's policy had certainly succeeded in reconciling the bulk of the Catholic population to the Crown. The Papal Bull of 1572 had absolved them from their oath of allegiance. The law of treason was amended to deal with the situation, but Elizabeth, foregoing a convenient addition to her exchequer, refused to allow Parliament to impose fines on Catholics who did not communicate. The Bull was followed up by an invasion of missionary priests pledged to the reconversion of England, and trained in France and Italy for that purpose. Before 1575 no Roman Catholics had been executed for their faith during Elizabeth's reign : from that time there was an average annual toll of seven, most of whom were definitely political conspirators, as compared with eighty Protestants a year, in Mary's days. In 1581 an Act was passed imposing a fine of £20 a month on absentees from the Anglican service. The Papists were unnecessarily alarmed : there was no provision for distraining on the property of those who refused to pay, and the Queen was quite aware of this defect in the machinery. From the richer recusants fines were collected and distributed by her among her needy courtiers. But it was a half-hearted gesture. The lack of stimulating persecution caused some

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dismay in Papal circles, especially a scheme for peacefully emigrating English Catholics to North America, which ultimately fell through. In the Armada year arrangements were made for rounding up and interning prominent Catholics, but the bulk of them showed exemplary loyalty. The new and more rigorous Conformity Act of 1593 was felt to be more dangerous to Protestant Separatists than to Papists, and a general flight to Holland recalls the Marian persecution, and anticipates the Pilgrim Fathers. When two loyal Protestants were hanged at Bury St. Edmunds the Queen is said to have wept over their fate, and it was certainly difficult to maintain any longer that dissidents were only punished for their policy, and not for their religion. But, contrasting it with the reigns of her father and sister, and with the normal condition of affairs on the Continent, her people might regard an occasional execution as a regrettable but necessary exception to a régime of astonishing and enviable mildness. It was only when the succession was touched, recalling the time when she herself had been the pretender, that Elizabeth's fears betrayed her into accesses of cruelty like the execution of the northern peasants. A similar instance is her harsh treatment of

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Lady Catherine Grey, sister of the Lady Jane, her successor under Henry VIII.'s will, who married without her consent, and was separated from her husband, and imprisoned till her death.

Elizabeth was afraid of losing her crown, but not of sudden death. Her personal courage was terrifying to the responsible ministers, but a quality which her people could appreciate. One day, when she was sitting in the royal barge on the Thames in company with the French Ambassador, a bullet narrowly missed her and struck one of the watermen. She immediately went to him, and ordered his wound to be bandaged with a scarf of her own, 'and so with her most constant and amiable countenance continued her entertainment of the Ambassador, as though there had been no such matter. Afterwards the man began to faint: her Highness then commanded a cloak to be put on his body, with such other necessary reliefs as were there presently to be had, without alteration of countenance.' The serving-man, who had fired the gun, was tried and sentenced to death. A large crowd assembled at the place of execution, and the Vice Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton, gave an impressive account of the circumstances of the crime. The Queen had just

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opened a book, and 'even as it pleased God with his holy hand, as it were, to direct her safety,' she had commanded her bargemen to row slowly : ' if they had hasted but two strokes more, they had brought her royal person into the shot itself. These words were scarcely spoken out by her Majesty, but this caitiff most unhappily (I must say most devilishly) discharged his arquebus, strongly charged with bullet, into the barge where her Majesty was.' Hatton then described how the Council had implored the Queen that the criminal should suffer the most horrible death which could be devised, and spoke of the terrible consequences to the country if the shot had been fatal to her. The crowd wept freely. Then suddenly he announced that the Queen knew that the man, Appletree, had fired a shot at random, without evil intention, and she therefore vouchsafed to pull him from the gallows, for she ' had rather suffered the wounds the Bargeman now hath, tenfold,' than that the meanest of her subjects should be unjustly condemned.

Not even the assassination of William of Orange in 1583 made Elizabeth treat her own danger seriously, but the discovery, a year later, of Francis Throgmorton's plot, with its threat of a French and Spanish invasion, alarmed her.

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She insisted on the expulsion of the Spanish Ambassador, who had been implicated in the plot, and ordered that Mary Stuart, with whom Throgmorton had been corresponding, should be more strictly confined.

The revelation of their Queen's peril caused an outburst of fury from her people. Their love for Elizabeth and dread lest she should be assassinated, found expression in the Bond of Association, by which her loyal subjects, and others who dared not refuse their signatures, voluntarily bound themselves, jointly and severally, to pursue to extermination any one who might attempt harm to the Queen's person, and any one, by whom, of course, Mary Stuart was meant, whose way to the Crown was opened by her untimely death. The Association was legalised by Parliament, but the Queen graciously pointed out that her subjects had overreached themselves in their loyalty, and suggested an amendment, making it clear that the Bond was not directed against the lawful heir to the throne. As to who that lawful heir might be she maintained her usual silence, but her Court had begun more or less openly to assume James's succession. His emancipation from Spanish and Papal influence, and from that of his mother, was con-

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summated in 1586 by the defensive alliance between the two countries, and, after much haggling about the sum, Elizabeth undertook to pay him a pension of £4000 a year.

CHAPTER VII

'A Prince is not a Prince but to his own subjects, therefore is not this place to acknowledge in them any principality, without it should at the same time, by a secret consent, confess subjection. If a Prince do acts of hostility without denouncing war, if he breaks his oath of Amity, or innumerable such other things contrary to the Law of Arms, he must take heed how he falleth into their hands whom he so wrongeth, for then is courtesy the best custom he can claim.'

Arcadia.

MEANWHILE, Elizabeth was gradually and with great reluctance pursuing a rather more aggressive foreign policy. At the end of 1584 an expedition to the West Indies, under the command of Sir Francis Drake, had been authorised by the Council, but she revoked his commission in order not to prejudice a peaceful settlement in the Netherlands, which she was endeavouring to negotiate with Spain. But in June next year the whole situation was changed by the arrival in the Thames of the tall ship *Primrose* with the news that Philip had laid an embargo upon foreign shipping 'excepting none of Holland, Zeeland, Easterland, Germany, England, and other Provinces that are

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in rebellion against me.' All merchandise was to be seized, and the ships and men secured. Elizabeth at once gave Drake authority to requisition ships, and in September he sailed for the purpose of open retaliation, furnished with a royal commission ; a year later he returned with £60,000 worth of booty.

Negotiations for peace in the Netherlands had broken down, and a month before Drake sailed Elizabeth concluded a treaty with the insurgents, agreeing to send troops under Leicester's command. In October she published a declaration informing the world that she intended to secure by armed intervention ' the restitution of the Low Countries to their ancient liberties, a surety from invasion of her own realm, and renewing of the mutual traffic between the countries.'

Leicester did not leave England till December. The Queen made one excuse after another for delay : after a bad night she fancied herself dying and would not let him leave her ; then expense became an insuperable difficulty until he promised to defray a large proportion of it himself. On his arrival in the Netherlands he at once accepted the Governorship, without consulting the Queen, and against her express instructions. She was furious : she had her-

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self refused the sovereignty, though pressed again and again by the States and by her own ministers, and now a creature of her own, in contempt of her orders, had made himself king in all but name. Worse than that, rumour said that his Countess, whom she hated, was about to join him in regal state. Moreover, in spite of what would have been a declaration of war from any other mouth, she was still negotiating peace with Spain. Elizabeth did not really desire the independence of the Netherlands : she detested rebels and had no love for Protestants as such : if Philip would only have allowed his subjects the liberties they had enjoyed under his ancestors, when trade with England had flourished, she would have been quite content. The Dutch, who had hailed Leicester as their deliverer, soon suspected Elizabeth's good faith : rumours spread of her double dealing with the enemy. Negotiations failed again, but she would furnish neither money nor men enough to destroy Spanish supremacy. Leicester, pleading ill-health, obtained her forgiveness—she could never be angry with him long—and returned to England.

Although negotiations with Spain were being furtively carried on by Elizabeth during the Netherlands campaign, Philip not unnaturally

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regarded her intervention as an act of war, and was preparing his navy for the invasion of England. Once more Mary Stuart had become a rallying point for conspirators both at home and abroad. During the later years of her captivity her presence was a definite asset : the action of time had re-established her personal character : she was the hope of the Catholic Church, persecuted and maligned by her Protestant enemies. In 1586 she gratified Philip by disinheriting her son, the Scottish King, and bequeathing to him her claims on the crowns of both England and Scotland.

Elizabeth's secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham, by means of his elaborate system of spies and *agents provocateurs*, was fully aware of Philip's preparations for war, and of the designs of the conspirators against Elizabeth's life. It was clear to him that Mary's execution was a political necessity, but he knew that only overwhelming evidence of her complicity could move Elizabeth. The elaborate plot devised by John Ballard and Anthony Babington came to his aid. The first step was to be the assassination of Elizabeth, 'the beast which troubleth all the world,' undertaken by six gentlemen about the Court, followed by the rescue of Mary Stuart and a Spanish invasion. Wal-

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singham boldly allowed the details to develop until he had secured proof that Mary was deeply involved, and he kept Elizabeth *au fait* with the traps he was setting for Mary. The means may have justified the end by current standards, but the means are very unsavoury reading.

The conspirators were executed, and a month later Mary was put on her trial at Fotheringhay before a special commission, and condemned to death. Parliament was summoned to consider the sentence : the Queen herself did not open Parliament in person, not, as she explained, from fear of assassination, but because she did not want to be present when the Chancellor expounded her kinswoman's guilt. Both Houses were unanimous in their petition that Mary should be executed. Elizabeth sent a message of thanks to her loving subjects for their great care and tender zeal for her safety, but it was the welfare of her people and not her personal danger that weighed with her. 'Nay, if England by my death might obtain a more flourishing condition, and a better Prince, I would most gladly lay down my life. For it is for my people's sake that I desire to live. As for me, I see no such great reason why I should either be fond to live or fear to die.

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I have had good experience of this world, I have known what it is to be a subject, and I now know what it is to be a sovereign. Good neighbours I have had, and I have met with bad ; and in trust I have found treason. I have bestowed benefits on ill-deservers ; and where I have done well, I have been ill-requited and spoken of. While I call to mind things past, behold things present, and look forward towards things to come, I count them happiest that go hence soonest. Nevertheless, against such evils and mischiefs as these, I am armed with a better courage than is common in my sex : so as whatsoever befalls me, death shall never find me unprepared.' She could give no answer on so momentous a question without due deliberation. This was followed by a further message, desiring that Parliament should advise, if possible, some course short of execution : the reply was again unanimous that they could find no other way than that set down in their petition. Elizabeth's response was to the effect that ' If I should say unto you that I mean not to grant your Petition, by my faith I should say unto you more than perhaps I mean. And if I should say unto you that I mean to grant your Petition, I should then tell you more than is fit for you to know. And thus I must deliver

you an Answer Answerless.' Parliament was adjourned without further satisfaction, but Elizabeth, after some hesitation, allowed the commissioners' sentence to be proclaimed : it was greeted by every manifestation of approval, by bells, bonfires and psalm-singing. It was plain that Parliament had expressed the feelings of the people. 'She is only a Cousin to you in a remote degree, but we be Sons and Children of this land, whereof you be not only the natural Mother, but also the Wedded Spouse. And therefore much more is due from you to us all than to her alone. . . . She hath already provided us a Foster-Father and a Nurse, the Pope and the King of Spain, into whose hands if it should mis-happen us to fall, what can we else look for but ruin, destruction and utter extirpation of goods, lands, lives, honour and all ?

'Whilst she shall live the enemies of the State will hope and gape after your death. By your death they trust to make Invasion profitable for them, which cannot be but the same should be most lamentable for us : and therefore it is meet to cut off the head of that hope.' How, Elizabeth was reminded, could her loyal subjects be true to their oath under the Bond of Association if she persisted in keeping the guilty Mary alive in their midst ?

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For the first and only time during her reign Elizabeth's private wishes were in opposition not only to the will of her people, but to that course which would undeniably promote their peace and welfare. She had preserved Mary's life hitherto on her own responsibility, against the advice of Parliament and of her ministers. The Babington Plot had furnished fresh evidence of the danger of Mary's presence as a vortex of conspiracy, but the danger was not a new one. The old argument, urged by the French Ambassador, pleading for the life of the Dowager Queen of France, remained untouched : kings, whatever their crimes, were subject to the jurisdiction of God alone. If she admitted the right of men, even of herself, a fellow Prince, to judge Mary, would she not weaken her own claim to rule by God's will, above all criticism but His ? This—the rational argument against Mary's execution—was strengthened by another, emotional in character. Her own sufferings during her sister's reign had left an indelible mark : she felt, it may be, that her guilt then had been little less than Mary Stuart's, but she had been luckier and more prudent. Perhaps she even felt, as she alone was in a position to feel, a curious sort of sympathy with the criminal. At any rate she

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had no personal desire to avenge herself on Mary : had they been, as she said, ' two milkmaids with pails upon their arms '—a reminiscence of the days when Elizabeth, herself a prisoner, walking in Woodstock Park, had envied the lot of the milkmaids, whose distant song she heard—she would readily have forgiven Mary.

The Queen's decision could not be indefinitely postponed. The country was disturbed by rumours of further plots against her life, of Mary's escape and a foreign invasion. Foreign representations on Mary's behalf had rather the effect of stiffening her resolution that her people should have their will. James made his protest, which Elizabeth met by the ironical suggestion that she should spare Mary's life on condition that, if there were any further trouble, he should renounce his claim to the English throne : the sacrifice was too great for a son whose mother had already bequeathed his crowns, actual and potential, to Philip of Spain. In February 1587, as the result of pressure from one of her ministers, the Queen sent for the warrant, which was brought to her by Davison, Walsingham's fellow secretary. She signed it, saying that her long delay was a proof of her unwillingness, and made some jocular remarks

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on the pleasure which her action must give to Walsingham and to Davison himself, a characteristic effervescence of vitality : she was amused at the position in which she had placed her unfortunate ministers by keeping them for months on tenterhooks. She instructed Davison to take the warrant to the Lord Chancellor to receive the great seal, and ordered that the execution should take place in the hall at Fotheringay rather than in the courtyard. Then, remarking that she had done all that could be expected of her in law and reason, she desired that she should be no further troubled in the matter. But, as Davison was leaving her presence, she recurred to a suggestion which she had already made to him. Mary's gaoler, Sir Amyas Paulet, had taken the oath of association : why should not he kill his prisoner secretly, and so relieve her of responsibility ? The idea must be put to him. Next day she sent for Davison, and, hearing that the warrant was already sealed in accordance with her command, asked why he had acted in such haste. A day or two later she told him merrily that she had dreamt that Mary had been actually executed, and she had been so angry with him that, if she had had a sword, she would have run him through. He pressed her as to her mean-

ing : had she changed her mind ? She swore one of her great oaths to the contrary, but again complained of the burden of responsibility which the constitutional procedure cast on herself. Later she asked what Paulet's reply had been to her suggestion, and, when told that he considered it dishonourable to himself, said that he was too dainty and precise a fellow, and untrue to his oath.

Meanwhile the Council had been alarmed by Davison's account of the Queen's attitude : it was only too obvious that she intended to evade her responsibility. They decided to accept the view that she had done all they could expect of her, and forward the warrant without further delay.

Elizabeth received the news of Mary's death calmly, and without comment : her first feeling must have been one of relief : this horrible affair which had been worrying her for months was settled at last. Next day an emotional reaction set in : she stormed and wept, declaring that she had never sanctioned the execution : Davison had exceeded her instructions ; she had only intended that the warrant should be ready if it were needed. She protested to James that the lamentable event had happened contrary to her meaning, and she fastened on

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the unhappy Davison as scapegoat. By this time she had no doubt persuaded herself that Mary's death was against her will as it was against her private wishes : she had saved her in the past ; a reprieve would still have been possible if the Council had not taken matters into their own hands. Liar is an ambiguous term : there are as many species of liars as there are of brambles or of grasses. Elizabeth was the histrionic type : and often—notably on this occasion—she deceived herself more than she did her audience. Her behaviour during this whole episode, although it shows her at her worst, was thoroughly in keeping both with her character and with her methods : the basis of it was not indecision, but a desire at all costs to reconcile and benefit by two incompatible lines of action, to be at once the woman she wished to be and the queen she had to be.

CHAPTER VIII

' On Thames's banks, in silent thought we stood
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood ;
Struck with the seat that gave ELIZA birth,
We kneel and kiss the consecrated earth ;
In pleasing dreams the blissful age renew,
And call Britannia's glories back to view ;
Behold her cross triumphant on the main,
The guard of commerce, and the dread of Spain,
Ere masquerades debauch'd, excise oppress'd,
Or English honour grew a standing jest.'

JOHNSON.

AFTER Mary's execution the rift was deep between Elizabeth and her Council : for weeks even Burghley was not allowed to approach her presence, so intent was she on persuading herself, and trying to persuade the world at large, that the responsibility was wholly theirs. In Paris popular indignation was intense : such an insult to the French nation cried for vengeance. Whether the King felt the death of his sister-in-law as other than a personal relief may be doubted. At any rate the danger of his taking up arms to avenge her memory was averted, as Elizabeth was endeavouring to propitiate Philip by active negotiations for peace in the Nether-

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lands, and Henry could not face the fear of a combination between England and Spain.

Meanwhile the reports of Philip's preparations for the Enterprise of England, on which he had been engaged for the two past years, were more alarming than ever. Peace negotiations were a convenient blind until he was ready, and excuses for delay were always as welcome to him as to Elizabeth herself, but Mary's death had been no check on his designs. Strengthened by the bequest of the Catholic martyr's claims, he now intended to assert his own right to the throne in virtue of his Lancastrian blood as a descendant of John of Gaunt. It was not part of his plan to reign in person; he proposed to present the crown of his dependency to his own nominee, probably to one of his daughters.

So menacing was the position, as described by English spies abroad, that Drake was commissioned to take charge of an expedition to the Spanish coast. His instructions were 'to impeach the joining together of the King of Spain's fleets out of their several ports, to keep victuals from them, to follow them in case they should be come forward towards England or Ireland, and to cut off as many of them as he could and impeach their landing; as also to set upon

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such as should either come out of the West or East Indies into Spain or go out of Spain thither'; he was also directed 'to distress the ships within the havens themselves.' But Elizabeth, still obstinately clinging to her hope of averting open war with Spain, insisted on sending fresh orders, so modified as to restrict operations to the capture of treasure ships at sea. Drake, knowing his Queen, had hurried his departure from Plymouth, and the messenger who pursued him with the amended instructions successfully failed to deliver them. He destroyed Spanish shipping, great and small, at Cadiz, reconnoitred Lisbon, the headquarters of the Spanish navy, and captured the King's own East Indiaman, laden with treasure valued at £114,000. Elizabeth, of course, on the strength of her second set of instructions, disavowed his action officially, but he had effectually prevented the Armada from sailing that year, and her own share of the booty was worth over £40,000. As the Venetian Ambassador in Spain remarked—'Every one is amazed to see how cleverly that woman manages in everything.'

Drake himself urged that he had only singed the King of Spain's beard—'the like preparation was never heard of or known, as the King

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of Spain hath and daily maketh to invade England'—the critical hour had been but delayed. Lord Howard of Effingham was appointed Lord High Admiral, with Drake as Vice-Admiral. But, in spite of her faith in Drake, Elizabeth could not even yet abandon her belief in her own diplomacy : she refused to allow another expedition to the Spanish coast in February 1588, which, if Drake had been given his head, must have been a death-blow to the Enterprise.

Another of the Queen's excellent appointments had been that of the old pirate and seaman, Sir John Hawkins, as Naval Comptroller. When the hour struck, a fleet far more worthy of the epithet Invincible than Philip's imposing but unwieldy array was awaiting its sailing orders. The victualling arrangements were less satisfactory, but their deficiencies have been unjustly ascribed to the Queen's parsimony. The sudden call for supplies for 15,000 men meant strict economy and short commons, and the custom of storing on board food for a month only, replenished a week before it was exhausted, was not adapted to the emergencies of a long naval war. Nor can Elizabeth be blamed for the lack of powder : the English fleet was far more adequately supplied than the

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Spanish, and the enormous expenditure of powder during the nine days' fighting in the Channel could have been foreseen by no one. The Lord Mayor's great-granddaughter, in her periodical swoops on the ordnance department, had insisted on strict business methods, and the reply to the Lord High Admiral's urgent demand for ammunition, that he must first specify the proportion of powder and shot required, has the ring of a really efficient Civil Service.

This is not the place to tell again the failure of Philip's plans for co-operation between his navy and the Spanish army in the Netherlands, and how the Invincible Armada was triumphantly driven away from the English coast. The use of fire-ships at a crucial moment has been claimed as a brilliant idea of Elizabeth's, but only on her own theory that as the Queen could never be responsible for failure, so every success belonged to her *ex officio*. Among these must be reckoned the prayer of her own composition, ordered to be read twice a week in parish churches throughout the country :

'We do instantly beseech Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, to be merciful to the Church militant here upon Earth, and at this time compassed about with most strong and subtle adversaries. O let Thine

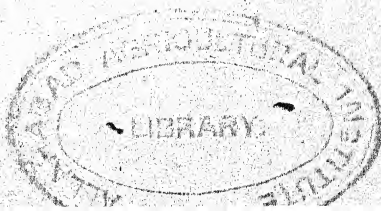
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enemies know that Thou hast received England, which they most of all for Thy gospel's sake do malign, into Thine own protection. Set a wall about it, O Lord, and evermore mightily defend it. Let it be a comfort to the afflicted, a help to the oppressed, and a defence to Thy Church and people, persecuted abroad. And forasmuch as this cause is now in hand, direct and go before our armies both by sea and land. Bless them, and prosper them : and grant unto them Thy honourable success and victory. Thou art our help and shield. O give good and prosperous success to all those that fight this battle against the enemies of Thy gospel.'

The Earl of Leicester commanded the troops on shore, with an experienced soldier, Sir Roger Williams as his second, and the trusty Hunsdon was stationed at Tilbury Fort in command of the Queen's bodyguard. The Queen, at the instance of her ministers, withdrew to Havering-atte-Bower for safety, while there was any danger of a Spanish landing, but she insisted on reviewing her army at Tilbury in person. Accompanied only by the Earls of Leicester and Ormonde, she rode bare-headed, carrying a marshal's truncheon, a steel corslet above her ample farthingale : a page followed, bearing the heavy white-plumed helmet. Her speech was worthy of this, her most effective piece of pageantry :

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‘My loving People, we have been persuaded by some, that are careful of our safety, to take heed how we commit ourselves to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery ; but I assure you, I do not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let Tyrants fear ; I have always so behaved myself, that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good-will of my subjects. And therefore I am come amongst you at this time, not as for my recreation and sport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all ; to lay down, for my God, and for my kingdom, and for my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman ; but I have the heart of a king, and of a King of England too ; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any Prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realms : to which, rather than any dishonour should grow by me, I myself will take up arms ; I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field. I know already, by your forwardness, and that you have deserved rewards and crowns ; and we do assure you, on the word of a Prince, they shall be duly paid you. In the mean my Lieutenant-General shall be in my stead, than whom never Prince commanded a more noble and worthy subject ; not doubting by your obedience to my General, by your concord in the camp, and by your valour in the field, we shall shortly have a famous victory over the enemies of my God, of my kingdom, and of my people.’



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Their services were not needed : while Elizabeth was still putting heart into her troops at Tilbury the news came that the Armada had been driven out of the Channel.

The Queen received a magnificent welcome when she returned to Westminster. Medals were struck in commemoration of the victory : one bore the device of a fleet flying under full sail, with the inscription *Venit, vidit, fugit*, another the fire-ships in action, ascribing the credit to the Queen in the words *Dux foemina facti*. Her Majesty attended a great thanksgiving service at St. Paul's, seated in state on a throne-like triumphal car, canopied by an imperial crown, and drawn by two milk-white horses. Her soul was no longer divided : she was again at one with her people, whose demonstrations of affection and trust had never been more hearty and more sincere. At last she had recognised their danger, and had led them courageously against the great enemy of their country and their creed. She was the heroine of a victory which had effaced the memory of her hesitations and delays. Yet it is characteristic of her methods that war against Spain had not been declared, nor would she ever permit a declaration of war, although the point was pressed later in Parliament and there

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was no peace during the rest of her reign. War was forced upon her, but she never accepted the initiative : she could always maintain that it was Philip's quarrel.

But on Elizabeth the woman fell a blow from which she never recovered. In the midst of the rejoicings her old friend and lover, the Earl of Leicester, was taken suddenly ill and died. After the first paroxysms of grief the Queen again played her part valiantly : the prime of life had lasted long with her, but now, at fifty-five, she became an old woman. Leicester, forgiven for his disobedience in the Netherlands, had been restored to the full height of her favour. On him, although her faith in his powers had not been tested, she had relied for the defence of her kingdom on shore. His activities in organising the land forces she had wished to reward by creating the office of Lord-Lieutenant of England and Ireland. The patent had been actually made out, and she was only deterred from giving such unprecedented power to a subject by the remonstrances of Burghley and Hatton. Such an honour would have been unwisely bestowed, but Leicester had served her loyally and well after his fashion. He has become the villain of the Elizabethan stage : deaths, even Edward

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the Sixth's and his own first wife's, Amy Robsart's, have been freely attributed to his murderous skill, but the picture of his vanity, ambition, and unscrupulousness has been overdrawn. Some notion of the part he played at Court may be constructed from Bacon's words to the Queen that it would have been better had she kept a later favourite, the young Earl of Essex, at her side, 'with a white staff in his hand, as my lord of Leicester had, and continued him still about you, for society to yourself, and for an honour and ornament to your attendance and court, in the eyes of your people and in the eyes of foreign ambassadors.' One defect of hers he certainly went far to supply: he was a great patron of the arts. Elizabeth to the end of her life soothed herself by reading the classical authors she had studied in her youth, but the literary glory of her reign owes nothing directly to her. She created the world in which the dramatists and poets wrote, but she was not of it. The young Spenser had been helped and encouraged by Leicester, but the beauties of *The Faery Queen* were squandered in vain for Elizabeth. Leicester's company of players helped to make Elizabethan drama: the Queen only expressed her amusement at Falstaffe.

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Elizabeth's life, in spite of the adulation and flattery, which had become a Court convention, was a very lonely one. When any misfortune befell her ladies she took trouble to show kindness and sympathy. Her visit to one of them in illness is described in a letter :

‘ The Queen's Majesty hath been with her twice, very late both times. The last time it was ten of the clock at night, or ever her Majesty went hence, being so great a mist, as there were diverse of the barges and boats that waited on her lost their ways, and landed in wrong places ; but thanks be to God her Majesty came well home without cold or fear.’

But she was always their Queen. ‘ Call to mind, good Kate,’ she wrote to another lady who had lost her daughter, ‘ how hardly we Princes can brook of crossing our commands ; how ireful will the highest power be, may you be sure, when murmurings shall be made of his pleasingest will ? Let nature therefore not hurt herself, but give place to the giver. Though this lesson be from a silly vicar, yet it is sent from a loving sovereign.’ With Leicester her relations were more human and intimate : he wrote to her about the doings of the Dudleys, Ursus Major and Ursus Minor, Sister Mary and Sister Kate, and a letter to the Countess of Shrewsbury, his hostess at Buxton, shows her

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teasing him like a sister. After explaining that she considers herself in debt for his entertainment, she suggests that his fare should be reduced :

‘ And therefore we think it for the saving of our credit meet to prescribe unto you a proportion of diet which we mean in no case you shall exceed, and that is to allow him by the day for his meat two ounces of flesh, referring the quality to yourselves, so as you exceed not the quantity, and for his drink the twentieth part of a pint of wine to comfort his stomach, and as much of St. Anne’s sacred water as he listeth to drink. On festival days, as is meet for a man of his quality, we can be content you shall enlarge his diet by allowing unto him for his dinner the shoulder of a wren, and for his supper a leg of the same, besides his ordinary ounces.’

Like the baby whose manners had troubled her governess, Elizabeth was not content without a taste of everything on life’s table. She had denied herself marriage with Leicester, the only marriage to which her affections ever prompted her ; she had kept her youth alive by surrounding herself with handsome and graceful young men like Raleigh and Hatton, who were willing to make her believe that she was the object of their hopeless passion, and she could not bear that those about her should enjoy an experience which she could not share.

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This objection to marriage was something more than unreasonable : it was almost insane, and a constant terror to her Court. She tried in vain to impose celibacy on her ladies. One unfortunate maiden was induced to confess her love, and the Queen told her that she had obtained her father's consent to the marriage. 'Then,' replied the lady, 'I shall be happy, an please your Grace.' 'So thou shalt ; but not to be a fool and marry. I have his consent given to me, and I vow thou shalt never get it into thy possession : so, go to thy business. I see thou art a bold one, to own thy foolishness so readily.' When one of her courtiers married she treated it as an infidelity to herself. A son of Lord Hunsdon's had made a perfectly suitable marriage to the complete satisfaction of his parents, but the Queen was 'mightily offended.' The story of his disgrace and restoration to favour illustrates this extraordinary infatuation on her part :

'Having ended my business, I meant to return to Carlisle again. My Father wrote to me from Windsor, that the Queen meant to have a great Triumph there on her Coronation-day, and that there was great preparation making for the course of the Field and Tourney. He gave me notice of the Queen's anger for my marriage, and said it may be, I being so near, and to return without honouring

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her day, as I ever before had done, might be a cause of her further dislike ; but left it to myself to do what I thought best. My business of Law therefore being ended, I came to Court, (Windsor) and lodged there very privately ; only I made myself known to my Father and some few friends besides. I here took order and sent to London to provide me things necessary for the Triumph. I prepared a present for her Majesty, which, with my caparisons, cost me above four hundred pounds. I came in to the Triumph unknown of any. I was the forsaken Knight, that had vowed solitariness ; but hearing of this great Triumph, thought to honour my Mistress with my best service, and then to return to pay my wonted mourning. The Triumph ended, and all things well passed over to the Queen's liking, I then made myself known in Court ; and for the time I stayed there was daily conversant with my old companions and friends : but I made no long stay.'

King James sent for his brother, Sir John Cary, to give him a message for Elizabeth :

'My Father shewed the letter to the Queen. She was not willing that my Brother should stir out of the town ; but knowing (though she would not know) that I was in Court, she said, "I hear your fine Son, that has lately married so worthily, is hereabouts ; send him if you will to know the King's pleasure." My Father answered he knew I would be glad to obey her commands. "No (said she) do you bid him go, for I have nothing to do with him." My Father came and told me what had

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passed between them. I thought it hard to be sent and not to see her ; but my Father told me plainly, that she would neither speak with me nor see me. "Sir," said I, "if she be on such hard terms with me, I had need be wary what I do. If I go to the King without her licence, it were in her power to hang me at my return, and that, for anything I see, it were ill trusting her." My Father merrily went to the Queen, and told her what I said. She answered, "If the gentleman be so mistrustful, let the Secretary make a safe-conduct to go and come, and I will sign it." Upon these terms I parted from Court, and made all the haste for Scotland.'

Robert Cary insisted on James putting his message in writing, and when the Queen told his father to bring the letter to her, he refused to trust any one else with it :

'With much ado I was called for in : and I was left alone with her. Our first encounter was stormy and terrible, which I passed over with silence. After she had spoken her pleasure of me and my wife, I told her, that "she herself was the fault of my marriage, and that if she had but graced me with the least of her favours, I had never left her nor her Court ; and seeing she was the chief cause of my misfortune, I would never off my knees till I had kissed her hand, and obtained my pardon." She was not displeased with my excuse, and before we parted we grew good friends. Then I delivered my message and my papers, which she took very well, and at last gave me thanks for the pains I had

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taken. So having her princely word that she had pardoned and forgotten all faults, I kissed her hand, and came forth to the presence, and was in the Court as I was ever before. This God did for me to bring me in favour with my Sovereign ; for if this occasion had been slipt, it may be I should never have seen her face more.'

CHAPTER IX

‘Look to it! There is a hundred pound.’

(The Queen to her footman after the presentation of a silver cup containing money.)

ELIZABETH always regarded herself not only as a Queen ruling by divine right, but as the head of a family. Like many other excellent parents she thought that there should be only one idea in the family on any given subject, and that idea must be her own. This attitude governed her dealings with her parliaments. The House of Commons, owing to the exclusion of Roman Catholics since the fifth year of her reign, was an entirely Protestant body, and included a large number of Puritans. Bills dealing with matters ecclesiastical were constantly introduced, but quashed at the instance of the Queen. At the opening of Parliament in 1593 the Lord Keeper explained the Queen's notion of Parliamentary liberty in her own presence :

‘For liberty of speech her majesty commandeth me to tell you, that to say yea or no to Bills, God forbid that any man should be restrained or afraid

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to answer according to his best liking, with some short declaration of his reason therein, and therein to have a free voice, which is the very true liberty of the house, not as some suppose to speak there of all causes as he listeth and to frame a form of Religion or a state of Government as to their idle brains shall seem meetest. She sayeth no king fit for his state will suffer such absurdities.'

The main function of Parliament in Elizabeth's eyes was to provide her with money, which she could not obtain legally without their assistance, and their recalcitrance on the questions of Church Government and the Succession prevented her from summoning a Parliament oftener than she could help. She was her own finance minister. On her accession she had been faced with financial chaos. Mary had squandered money on her Spanish husband, and died heavily in debt. The currency, which had been debased in the reign of Henry VIII., was also destandardised : coins of nominally the same value contained different proportions of silver. The effect on food prices was disastrous, as the farmers tried to recoup themselves by exorbitant charges. Elizabeth gave the problem her personal attention ; a minute in her own handwriting is still extant. In 1560 she decided to call in all coins : they

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were reminted, and the currency restored at a slight profit to the Treasury.

The sterling exchange, which was also in a deplorable condition, was restored by Thomas Gresham, a man after the Queen's own heart, capable, patriotic, and not unduly scrupulous. For several years he acted first in Antwerp and then in Hamburg, part diplomat and part financier, and with the manipulation of loans and the purchase of war stores, tactfully labelled 'velvet,' he contrived to make a handsome fortune for himself. Much of it he spent in the public interest, and his memory survives in the Gresham Lectures, in the Royal Exchange, so named by his Queen to the sound of trumpets, and in the economic law 'bad money drives out good,' which no nation has yet violated without disaster. He was honoured, as the Queen loved to honour useful subjects, with a knighthood which cost her nothing, and visits which cost him vast sums.

Elizabeth's intelligent interest in finance enabled her, in spite of heavy expenditure on the war with Spain, and substantial assistance to the Huguenots and the Dutch Protestants, to keep her demands for parliamentary subsidies within reasonable limits. She did not allow agents of the Crown to grind the faces of the

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poor as her father had done : she prided herself too much on retaining the love of her people, and her own love of them was perfectly sincere. She was the Absolute Mother of her family, and no more tyrannical than belongs to the part. Although the subsidies granted by Parliament were in effect ordinary taxes, the graceful fiction was maintained that they were free gifts to the Queen from her loving subjects in order to assist her in protecting them from their enemies. At the close of a Parliament, when she was seated on her throne in the House of Lords, the Speaker presented the Bill of Subsidy, and it was deposited on a table before her, as much a gift in form as the offering of £100 in a silver cup by the Mayor of Norwich. 'The subsidy you give me,' she said in 1593, 'I accept thankfully, if you give me your good will with it ; but if the necessity of the time and your Preservation did not require it, I would refuse it.' In 1571 she had actually remitted a subsidy granted in expectation of a settlement of the succession, because she had disappointed the hopes of Parliament.

In 1588 the Queen instituted a system of supplementing the parliamentary subsidies when necessary by Privy Seal loans. These loans, for sums varying from £20 to £100, were required

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from well-to-do people of the middle class. A list of suitable persons was made out by the Lord-Lieutenant of the county, and a letter presented, of which Elizabeth herself corrected the draft, explaining her need for a loan 'which is not refused between neighbour and neighbour.' Save for the politeness of the request, the Queen's instructions that there should be no oppression, and the fact that—except in 1598, when payment was deferred for six months—they were always repaid punctually at the end of a year, these loans differed little in character from Henry VIII.'s forced loans. At first they were collected without difficulty, but towards the end of her reign there were more complaints of inability to pay.

From 1589 onwards Elizabeth borrowed more freely from London merchants, whose prosperity had materially increased : she also derived large sums from the sale of Crown lands. When the grant of a subsidy was under discussion in the Parliament of 1593, Burghley explained that since they met four years before the Queen had spent £1,030,000 of her own treasure on defensive wars, in order to save England from invasion. 'As for her own private expenses they have been little in building ; she hath consumed little or nothing in her

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pleasures. As for her apparel it is Royal and Princely, becoming her calling, but not sumptuous nor excessive.'

When we remember Elizabeth's wardrobe of two thousand dresses, and the series of portraits with a similar head, posed in opposite directions, always in a different magnificent costume, Lord Burghley's standard of dress seems rather high. But many of Elizabeth's dresses were gifts from her subjects. It was quite usual for a host, on her Progresses, to present a jewelled robe, and the lists of New Year gifts include many costly objects of apparel, embroidered underwear, scented gloves, slippers studded with precious stones. Her pleasures were also largely provided for her : the nobles who amused her in the tiltyard supplied their own gorgeous armour and richly caparisoned horses : the entertainments given during her Progresses, often involving not only pageants and fat feasts but the building of painted pavilions and, on one occasion, the opening of a vista through the woodland during a single night, because the Queen had complained that there was no view from the guest-chamber, were at the expense of her hosts. Courtiers who held office, and those who sought it, had to pay, or run into debt, for their privileges.

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Official salaries were often totally inadequate : Sir Henry Sidney, three times Lord Deputy of Ireland, spent an average of £3000 from his own fortune during each term of service. His son, Sir Philip, who had been commanded to escort the Portuguese pretender, Don Antonio, to Dover, implored Sir Christopher Hatton to procure his recall, as the Don's ships were wind-bound, and he had 'grown almost to the bottom of my purse.' On another occasion when he was out of employment and staying in the country to avoid Court expenses, he remarked, with a characteristic pun, that so long as the Queen 'sees a silk doublet upon me Her Highness will think me in good case.' Leicester, who had borne heavy charges in the Netherlands campaign, died in debt, and Walsingham, whom the Queen refused to assist when he had ruined himself by paying his son-in-law's, Sir Philip Sidney's, debts, also incurred in public service in the Netherlands, was buried secretly at night to avoid the expense of a public funeral. When faces had to be ground, Elizabeth chose to operate on the rich.

CHAPTER X

'It may be thought simplicity in me, that all this time of my reign I have not sought to advance my territories and enlarge my dominions; for opportunity hath served me to do it. I acknowledge my womanhood and weakness in that respect, but though it had not been hard to obtain yet I doubted how to keep the things so obtained; that only held me from such attempts, and I must say my mind was never to invade my neighbours or to usurp over any.

I am contented to reign over mine own and to rule as a just Prince.'

DURING the years immediately following the Armada, Elizabeth had no hope of peace, only the choice between a defensive and an aggressive policy. She could distract Philip's attention from a further enterprise against England by helping her Continental neighbours to resist Spain, or she could become Philip's rival in the New World, wrest trade and possessions from him, and found her own colonial empire. In 1590 Walsingham, who had been Leicester's colleague in the forward party on the Council, also died: the balance of power among her councillors was destroyed, and the policy of prudence prevailed.

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Her choice was a wise one : the Dutch still needed her active support, and the French situation had been changed in 1589 by the assassination of Henry III. and the accession of the Huguenot, Henry of Navarre. Henry IV. had still to fight for his crown against his Catholic subjects, supported by Philip. A France under Spanish influence would have been fatal to Elizabeth : ultimately it must have meant the complete subjection of the Netherlands to Spain, and a long line of enemy coast as a base for an Armada, Invincible in more than name. Henry's appeal was no longer that of a Huguenot rebel, but of a king by divine right. Elizabeth, as she said, 'yielded him such aids as never any king hath done the like to any other.' She lent him large sums, and sent over troops, but her conditions were hard : loans must be repaid in nine months at most, and after the first month her soldiers were to serve at his expense. But her indignation when Englishmen accepted orders conferred on them by Henry is characteristic :

'As a virtuous woman ought to look on none but her husband, so a subject ought not to cast his eyes on any other Sovereign than him God hath set over him. I will not have my sheep marked with a

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strange brand, nor suffer them to follow the pipe
of a strange shepherd.'

Her ruling still holds. Foreign orders can only be received with the licence of the sovereign, which is, however, conveyed in language less picturesque. Moreover she bargained for, though she never obtained, a French port to redeem the loss of Calais. In 1593 Henry realised that a Protestant could not hope to govern a united France, and France must be united if she were to resist the power of Spain. To secure his kingdom he changed his faith. Elizabeth expressed the indignation incumbent on a Protestant Queen :

' Ah, what grief,' she wrote, ' ah, what regret, ah, what pangs have seized my heart, at the news which Morlant has communicated ! My God, is it possible that any worldly consideration could render you regardless of the divine displeasure ? Can we reasonably expect any good result can follow such an iniquity ? How could you imagine that He, whose hand has supported and upheld your cause so long, would fail you at your need ? It is a perilous thing to do ill that good may come of it ! Nevertheless, I yet hope your better feelings may return, and, in the meantime, I promise to give you the first place in my prayers, that Esau's hands may not defile the blessing of Jacob. The friendship and fidelity you promise to me, I own I have dearly earned ; but of that I should never have repented, if you had not

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abandoned your father. I cannot now regard myself as your sister, for I always prefer that which is natural to that which is adopted, as God best knows, whom I beseech to guard and keep you in the right way, with better feelings.

‘Your sister, if it be after the old fashion : with the new I will have nothing to do.’

‘E. R.’

Under the influence of shock Elizabeth summoned Whitgift and took a course of theology : she also translated Boethius’s *De Consolatione Philosophiae* in order to recover her tranquillity. In Henry’s place she would undoubtedly have acted as he did, and far more speedily : a Mass would have seemed to her a cheap price to pay for peace and stability, and she would have turned Catholic within four days or four weeks, instead of delaying through four years of constant warfare. Henry’s conversion, little strain on the conscience of one whose Protestantism was only a political habit of mind, was fully justified : by 1595 he had expelled Jesuit conspirators, and become strong enough to declare war on Spain. Three years later he made a separate peace in spite of Elizabeth’s expostulations :

‘If there be any sin in the world against the Holy Ghost it is ingratitude. If you get any reasonable terms at the Spaniard’s hands, you may thank the

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English succours for it. Forsake not an old friend, for a new one will not be like him. . . . A bundle of rods bound together is not easily broken. There is no easier way to overthrow us both than by parting and disjoining us one from the other.'

She dubbed him 'the Antichrist of ingratitude.'

In 1595 Elizabeth herself was more inclined toward aggressive action. The mantles of the old forward party had fallen on a new favourite, the young Earl of Essex, Leicester's son-in-law, who had married—Elizabeth forgave him after the usual flare of indignation, but would not receive his wife at Court—Walsingham's daughter, the widow of Sir Philip Sidney. The lonely queen had fastened her violent affections upon him from the time of Leicester's death : he became, as it were, the son of whom fate had deprived her, the son of a fond and jealous mother, tyrannical and uneven in temper. When first presented to her as a child of ten, he had refused the Queen's kiss and kept on his little hat ; so now he was too unruly, hot-headed and ambitious to step quietly into Leicester's place as political figure-head and domesticated companion to the Queen, but ready enough to advocate the policy which would have commended itself to Leicester and Walsingham and Sidney. He had already

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escaped on sundry minor expeditions abroad, with or without the Queen's consent. Now, when rumours were rife that another Armada was preparing to invade England the next year—in 1595 there was a Spanish raid on the Cornish coast—he urged the importance of forestalling Philip. Drake and Hawkins were allowed to sail on a buccaneering expedition to the Indies : both admirals died, and it was in itself a failure. But a more important project was in the wind—an attack against Spain at home. An expedition was organised under the joint command of Howard, the Lord High Admiral, and Essex himself, and equipped largely at their own expense. English troops were withdrawn from the Netherlands, and the Dutch contributed both ships and fighting men:

‘ We have 300 green headed youths covered with feathers, gold and silver lace,’ wrote a friend of Francis Bacon’s, ‘ at the least ten thousand soldiers, as tall handsome men, as ever I cast eye on, who being conducted by a lion must work lion’s effects. Our navy in this port beautiful to behold, about 150 sail, whereof eighteen of her Majesty’s own, since her reign never so many before.’

In the early summer of 1596 the fleet sailed from Plymouth. Hopes ran high. Elizabeth composed a prayer for the use of her soldiers

and sailors, and Robert Cecil copied a private prayer of her own, which he came by 'accidentally'—such accidents were not uncommon where Elizabeth's performances were concerned—to encourage Essex, 'for there is nothing, that so much pleaseth the ears of the Almighty, as prayers ; no prayer so fruitful as that, which proceedeth from those, who do nearest in nature and power approach him ; none so near approach his place and essence, as a celestial mind in a princely body. And as his divine majesty hath an eye more singular to actions of princes ; so hath he doubtless an ear more gracious to their prayers.'

But the fruits of her prayer were neither so many nor so ripe as had been expected. The town of Cadiz was conquered, but not held for the Queen, an essential part of Essex's plan : the Spaniards succeeded in destroying a quantity of valuable merchandise before it fell into the hands of the enemy, and the treasure fleet from the Indies again escaped. To the great annoyance of the Queen the plunder did not recoup her own share of the expense.

Philip had intended to despatch another Armada ever since the defeat of the first, and his indecision and delays had been the despair of the Spanish nobles. They welcomed the

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sack of Cadiz, because at last the King was, goaded into action. A fleet, hastily and inefficiently organised, sailed in the middle of October, but it was scattered, and many vessels destroyed by autumn gales. The Enterprise of England was again postponed.

CHAPTER XI

‘By art and nature together so blended, it was difficult to find her right humour at any time.’

SIR JOHN HARRINGTON.

‘Une grande princesse qui n’ignore rien.’

DE MAISSE.

IN the spring of 1596 the Queen was ill : she suffered from sleeplessness and an inflammation of the breast, but as usual refused to take physic. There was general consternation : her age was sixty-three, the grand climacteric, given by multiplying the sacred numbers 7 and 9 : was this to be the fatal year ? She recovered, but a few weeks later the Bishop of St. David’s preached before her, tactlessly choosing as his text, ‘O teach us to number our days, that we incline our hearts unto wisdom.’ He began with a dissertation on mystical numbers, three for the Trinity, and so on, till he came to seven times nine, when he perceived displeasure on the countenance of his royal auditor, who sat in her closet, facing the pulpit. Hastily steering off the shoals, he spoke of 666, which

proved the Pope to be Antichrist, and 88 .
 signalling the defeat of the Armada, and
 ended by a prayer which he put into the aged
 Elizabeth's own mouth : ' Now therefore grant
 me grace that though mine outward man thus
 perish, yet my inner man may be renewed daily.
 So direct me with Thy Holy Spirit that I may
 daily wax elder in godliness, wisdom being my
 grey hairs and undefiled life mine old age.'
 This was not happy : the divinity that hedged
 a queen was proof against the years : the grey
 hairs were hidden beneath an auburn wig.
 Elizabeth opened the closet window, and told
 the Bishop that he should have kept his arith-
 metic to himself, ' but I see the greatest clerks
 are not the wisest men.' He was confined to
 his own house as a punishment.

Preaching before the Queen was a dangerous
 trade : on another occasion the preacher gave
 a plain hint that the time had come when she
 should declare James her successor :

' When he had finished this sermon, there was no
 man that knew Queen Elizabeth's disposition, but
 imagined that such a speech was as welcome as salt
 to the eyes, or, to use her own word, " to pin up
 her winding sheet before her face, so to point out
 her successor, and urge her to declare him " :—
 wherefore, we all expected that she would not only
 have been highly offended, but in some present

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speech have shewed her displeasure. It is a principle not to be despised, *qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare*. . . . When she opened the window, we found ourselves all deceived ; for very kindly and calmly, without show of offence, (as if she had but waked out of some sleep) she gave him thanks for his very learned sermon.¹

Elizabeth had mischievously disappointed the Court of its sensation, but later she sent the preacher a sharp reprimand.

‘She was a queen, and therefore beautiful,’ says Sir Philip Sidney demurely of one of his personages in the *Arcadia*. Elizabeth would have taken the remark seriously enough, but at sixty-three, with gaps in her front teeth, even a queen requires constant reassurance. ‘My brother, the King of France,’ she said to an Italian visitor, ‘writes to me that I am to show you the most beautiful things in this kingdom, and the first thing you see is myself, the ugliest.’ After receiving the inevitable compliment, she smiled and said, ‘Once on a time when I was a princess, I was more esteemed by your lords than now I am a Queen : but you are afraid of that old fellow.’¹

Elizabeth’s burden would have been a heavy one, even for younger shoulders. In 1596 the

¹ The Pope.

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harvest had failed : the people were starving, and soldiers returning from foreign service turbulent and disaffected. The Spanish war and rebellions in Ireland were a constant source of disquietude. Burghley, in his seventy-sixth year, and Robert Cecil, who had never been young, 'the father and the son,' 'the old leviathan and his cub,' 'the omnipotent couple,' were powerful, but unpopular both with the people and the Court, while the gallant Essex cast his spell over both. The Cecils, taking advantage of his absences from England, managed to discredit his conduct of the Cadiz and subsequent minor expeditions, and to secure important political positions for their own supporters. Unlike Leicester, 'whose custom it was to put all his passions in his pocket,' Essex, we are told, was 'a greater resenter and a weak dissembler of the least disgrace': he stormed and sulked. On one occasion when his candidate was rejected he scornfully turned his back on the Queen, who gave him a box on the ear, and bade him go and be hanged. He put his hand on his sword, and, when the Lord High Admiral intervened, swore that he would not have taken such an affront from Henry VIII. himself, and left the Court in a rage. The Queen forgave this and much more, but,

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though she soothed herself by reading, and 'did much admire Seneca's wholesome advisings, when the soul's quiet was flown away,' passionate scenes and emotional reconciliations, together with political anxieties, had their effect upon her temper. Her ladies suffered both from her tongue and her hands, especially when indiscreet enough to flirt with Essex. A rich garment, designed to attract him, was privately secured by the Queen. She put it on, and made the unhappy owner admit that it was too short: 'Why then, if it become not me as being too short, I am minded it shall never become thee as being too fine; so it fitteth neither well.' Her courtiers did not escape either: one young spark notes that:

'The Queene loveth to see me in my last frieze jerkin, and saith, 'tis well enoughe cut. I will have another made liken to it. I do remember she spit on Sir Mathew's fringed cloth, and said, the fool's wit was gone to rags.—Heaven spare me from such gibing.'

Burghley, tired out and always averse from war, wanted to make peace with Spain, but here the influence of Essex prevailed. On her sixty-fourth birthday the Queen gave an audience to the Ambassador of the new King of

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Denmark, who wished to act as mediator between her and Philip. She haughtily dismissed the suggestion : the King was too young to know the rights of the matter : the breach had been Philip's, and she would not sue for peace or allow any one else to do so on her behalf : ' For know now, and be it known to the King your master, and all kings, Christian or heathen, that the Queen of England hath no need to crave peace, for I assure you that I never endured one hour of fear since my first coming to my kingdom and subjects.' But she jested graciously with the Ambassador, who had asked that in honour of the day his master should have a happy reply :

' I blame you not to expect a reasonable answer, and a sufficient ; but you may think it a great miracle that a child born at four o'clock this morning should be able to answer so wise and learned a man as you are, sent from so great a Prince as you be, about so great and weighty affairs you speak of, and in an unknown tongue, by three o'clock in the afternoon.'

A Polish Ambassador was also received this year. The Queen, hearing that he was a personable and witty fellow, and expecting overtures of peace from the King of Poland, arranged to give him an audience in full state.

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Attired in a long robe of black velvet, bedizened with jewels, he delivered, after duly kissing her Majesty's hands, a Latin oration, arraigning her for the treatment of Polish merchants, who had been despoiled of their goods. And, further, 'because there were quarrels between her and the King of Spain, she took upon her by mandate to prohibit him and his countries, assuming to herself thereby a superiority not tolerable over other princes.' The King's message concluded with the threat that 'if her Majesty would not reform it, he would.' The Queen, indignant at this public challenge, after a short pause, burst into a Latin speech, beginning with the words: '*Expectavi Legationem, mihi vero querelam adduxisti.*' Is this the business the King has sent you about? Surely I can hardly believe that if the King himself were present, he would have used such language; for if he should, I must have thought that being a King not of many years, and that *non de jure sanguinis sed jure electionis, immo noviter electus*, he may haply be uninformed of that course which his father and ancestors have taken with us, and which peradventure shall be observed by those that shall live to come after us. And as for you, although I perceive you have read many books to fortify your arguments in this

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case, yet I am apt to believe that you have not lighted upon the chapter that prescribes the form to be used between kings and princes ; but were it not for the place you hold, to have so publicly an imputation thrown upon our justice, which as yet never failed, we would answer this audacity of yours in another style. And for the particulars of your negotiations, we will appoint some of our Council to confer with you, to see upon what ground this clamour of yours hath his foundation.'

In spite of her age and her troubles, the Queen preserved her majestic bearing : the fierce vitality of the wax effigy in Westminster Abbey gives some idea of her personality during the last years of her reign. In 1598 a German traveller described her appearance as she went in state to her chapel at Greenwich :

'Next came the Queen, in the sixty-fifth year of her age, as we were told, very majestic ; her face oblong, fair, but wrinkled ; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant ; her nose a little hooked ; her lips narrow, and her teeth black (a defect the English seem subject to, from their too great use of sugar) ; she had in her ears two pearls, with very rich drops ; she wore false hair, and that red ; upon her head she had a small crown, reported to be made of some of the gold of the celebrated Lunebourg Table. Her bosom was uncovered, as all the English Ladies have

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it till they marry ; and she had on a necklace of exceeding fine jewels ; her hands were small, her fingers long, and her stature neither tall nor low ; her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day she was dressed in white silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and over it a mantle of black silk, shot with silver threads ; her train was very long, the end of it borne by a Marchioness ; instead of a chain, she had an oblong collar of gold and jewels. As she went along in all this state and magnificence, she spoke very graciously, first to one, then to another, whether foreign ministers, or those who attended for different reasons, in English, French, and Italian ; for, besides being well skilled in Greek, Latin, and the languages I have mentioned, she is mistress of Spanish, Scotch, and Dutch : whoever speaks to her, it is kneeling ; now and then she raises some with her hand.'

Another foreign visitor at this time, Henry iv.'s Ambassador, De Maisse, was admitted to Whitehall, and watched the preparations for the lonely ceremony of the Queen's dinner, with the precautions against poison :

'When the Queen is served, a great table is set in the Presence Chamber near the Queen's throne. The cloth being laid, a gentleman and a lady come in, walking from the end of the room with the cover, and make three reverences, the one by the door, the next in the middle of the chamber, the third by the table. Then they set down the cover and the

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lady tries the food. The guards bring in the meat in the same manner ; then the lady tries the food with a piece of bread and gives it to the guards ; thence the meat, such as the Queen desires, is carried into the Privy Chamber where she dines. Her service is neither very sumptuous nor delicate.’

The Ambassador describes his first audience when the Queen had sent one of her gentlemen to bring him to the palace :

‘ He led me along a passage somewhat dark, into a chamber that they call the Privy Chamber, at the head of which was the Queen seated in a low chair, by herself, and withdrawn from all the Lords and Ladies that were present, they being in one place and she in another. After I had made my reverence at the entry of the chamber, she rose and came five or six paces towards me, almost into the middle of the chamber. I kissed the fringe of her robe and she embraced me with both hands. She looked at me kindly, and began to excuse herself that she had not sooner given me audience, saying that the day before she had been very ill with a gathering on the right side of her face, which I should never have thought seeing her eyes and face : but she did not remember to have been so ill before.’

She also affected dismay at receiving De Maisse and his suite in her dressing-gown :

‘ This dress had slashed sleeves lined with red taffeta, and was girt about with other little sleeves that hung down to the ground, which she was for

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ever twisting and untwisting. She kept the front of her dress open, and one could see the whole of her bosom, and passing low, and often she would open the front of this robe with her hands as if she was too hot. The collar of the robe was very high, and the lining of the inner part all adorned with little pendants of rubies and pearls, very many, but quite small. She had also a chain of rubies and pearls about her neck. On her head she wore a garland of the same material and beneath it a great reddish-coloured wig, with a great number of spangles of gold and silver, and hanging down over her forehead some pearls, but of no great worth. On either side of her ears hung two great curls of hair, almost down to her shoulders and within the collar of her robe, spangled as the top of her head. Her bosom is somewhat wrinkled as well as (one can see for) the collar that she wears round her neck, but lower down her flesh is exceeding white and delicate, so far as one could see.'

On another occasion, when the Queen was also wearing a loose gown, De Maisse speaks again of the same nervous gestures: 'When she raises her head she has a trick of putting both hands on her gown and opening it inso-much that all her belly can be seen.' Elizabeth had always made great play with her beautiful hands: even now she drew the Ambassador's attention to them:

'Having told her at some point that she was well

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advertised of everything that happened in the world, she replied that her hands were very long by nature and right, *an nescis longas Regibus esse manus?* whereupon she drew off her glove and showed me her hand, which is very long and more than mine by more than three broad fingers. It was formerly very beautiful, but it is now very thin, although the skin is still most fair.'

De Maisse was impressed by the beauty and grace of her figure, by her vigour, and above all by her dignity :

'She preserves a great gravity amidst her own people. Having entered this time into the Chamber, she walked in a manner marvellous haughty, having Secretary Cecil near her ; and I believe she did so expressly that I might see her while she pretended not to see me.'

But with De Maisse himself she unbent and chatted freely, as she had chatted more than thirty years before with Mary Stuart's Ambassador, and with a like display of childish vanity. She spoke of her proficiency in music and the dance, and called herself old and foolish only that he might gainsay it. She told him of Philip's frequent attempts to have her assassinated, and of the flattering suggestion made by one of her ministers 'that it was the force of love which made the King of Spain behave so,

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and that it was a dangerous kind of love ; . . . but she was in God's keeping.' She talked, too, of the lies current about her in Rome, how the bears she baited were Catholics covered with skins, and how she had put a hundred and four Catholic women to death in one house. She also 'made me a great discourse of the friendship her people bore her, telling me that it was unbelievable, and how she loved them no less than they her, and she would die rather than see any diminution on the one part or the other.'

De Maisse speaks of Burghley as old and white, very deaf, and carried in a chair on account of his gout. In the summer of 1598 he died. Elizabeth visited him during his illness, feeding him tenderly with her own hand. Her grief was unaffected. Burghley had served her well and faithfully, and she put more trust in him than in any of her other ministers. She called him her 'Spirit,' and a playful note, written to soothe his wounded feelings, shows her affection for him :

'*Sir Spirit*,—I doubt I do nick-name you. For those of your kind (they say) have no sense. But I have lately seen an *ecce signum*, that if an ass kick you, you feel it too soon. I will recant you from being *Spirit* if ever I perceive that you disdain not such a

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feeling. Serve God, fear the King, and be a good fellow to the rest.'

This year was also marked by the death of her great enemy and the pretender to her throne, Philip of Spain ; but his son inherited his war with England.

CHAPTER XII

'Were now the general of our gracious empress,
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit,
To welcome him !'

Henry V.

ELIZABETH had not sought to increase her possessions abroad, but she had inherited a territory half-conquered and unsubdued. Ireland was a useful training-ground for young adventurers when no better wars were afoot elsewhere, but the Queen and her councillors would thankfully have seen it sink beneath the waves. Such an important base for Spanish and French operations against England, and for the intrigues of Mary Stuart, could not be allowed to drift into enemy hands, but the straitened condition of English finances did not allow of the expenditure necessary to reduce Ireland to an English dependency and rule it efficiently. The Queen refused her deputies an adequate supply of money and troops, and she loaded them with bitter reproaches because the task of conquest was not

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speedily accomplished. Her praise and gratitude were earned by the first Earl of Essex for his treacherous massacre of the O'Neills in 1574, and the hideous slaughter of women and children on the Island of Rathlin : for her the Irish were savages and rebels, never ' my people.'

During the last years of her reign rebellions in Ireland were systematically fostered by Spain : English commanders sustained serious defeats, and by 1598 the whole country was in a state of revolt. In the spring of 1599 Essex was sent over with 16,000 foot and 1300 horse as Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland. Shakespeare's solitary mention of a looked-for contemporary event is significant. Essex's general reputation was untarnished : still the popular hero, he left the peaceful city with his long train of nobility and gentry amid the plaudits of the people. But any faith the Queen may have had in his judgment had been shattered by the storms between them, and by Robert Cecil's gentle, persistent disparagement. His instructions were to prosecute an immediate campaign in Ulster against the chief rebel, the Earl of Tyrone, whose successes had touched Elizabeth's vanity. This proved on his arrival in Ireland to be totally impracticable :

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no effort was made by the Queen or her Council to appreciate his difficulties, and he was constantly hampered by criticism and orders from home. The Ulster campaign was injudiciously pressed, and the permission which he had obtained to return to England for consultation, should he deem it necessary, definitely revoked. Tyrone demanded a personal interview with Essex, which was followed by a truce for the consideration of terms of peace. Had Essex refused this and insisted on giving battle, his little army must have been overwhelmed by the superior numbers of the Irish. In spite of the Queen's express prohibition he returned in haste to England.

‘Upon Michaelmas Eve, about ten o'clock in the morning,’ writes an invaluable contemporary gossip, ‘my Lord of Essex lighted at Court Gate in post, and made all haste up to the Presence and so to the Privy Chamber, and stayed not till he came to the Queen's Bed Chamber, where he found the Queen newly up, the hair about her face ; he kneeled unto her, kissed her hands, and had some private speech with her, which seemed to give him great contentment, for coming from her Majesty to go shift himself in his chamber, he was very pleasant and thanked God, though

he had suffered much trouble and storms abroad he found a sweet calm at home.' At another interview, an hour later, the Queen was again gracious: she had yielded to her first impulse, joy in the return of the human being whom, since Leicester's death, she had most loved. But when after dinner she received him a third time—the last of all their meetings—tenderness had vanished: she remembered only that he had failed to subdue Tyrone, and had disobeyed her direct command by coming home. He was angrily dismissed from her presence, and received an order that night to confine himself to his own room. Next day he was summoned before the Council, and shortly afterwards sent from Nonsuch Palace, where the interviews with the Queen had taken place, to York House, under the charge of the Lord Keeper. The Queen's anger grew as she brooded over his failure, and his defiance of her command: his hasty entry into the Bedchamber became an overbold intrusion, and the private conference with Tyrone was magnified to treachery. She harshly refused leave for him to write to his wife, who had just had a baby, or to be attended by his own doctor.

Her godson, Harington, who had been in

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Ireland with Essex, writes of his own reception :
' She chafed much, walked fastly to and fro, looked with discomposure on her visage ; and, I remember, she caught my girdle when I kneeled to her, and swore, " By God's Son I am no Queen ; that *man* is above me ;—Who gave him command to come here so soon ? I did send him on other business." ' Harington's offensive girdle reminded her of his new knight-hood. She was outraged by Essex's creation of sixty knights during his Irish command, and had a proclamation drawn up depriving more than half of them of the dignity, but Cecil wisely managed to delay and finally prevent its issue.

For nearly a year Essex was treated as a prisoner, though permitted during the latter part to live in his own house. Elizabeth's implacability shows that her vanity and her affections, always inextricably twisted together, had been deeply wounded. In Leicester's case she had found contempt by a subject of her divine right to absolute obedience hard to forgive, and Essex's youth made his resistance to her instructions more offensive : a distrust of youth was one of her defences against her own old age. Politically his unruliness was more dangerous, as he had no mentor at Court to guide

him, like the astute Walsingham, who was known as Leicester's 'spirit.' Essex was popular as Leicester had never been : was she jealous of a rival for her people's love ? She was with difficulty deterred from ordering that he should be brought before the Star Chamber, a proceeding which the charges against him did not justify. In June 1600 he was tried by a commission, acquitted of disloyalty, but still confined to his house at the Queen's pleasure. Two months later she permitted his release, but forbade him to come to Court. His letters supplicating her to allow him access to her presence were ignored, and she refused to renew his main source of income, the monopoly in sweet wine, saying, 'An unruly horse must be abated of his provender that he may be the easier managed.'

Harington has described the effect on Essex of this arbitrary treatment :

'It resteth with me in opinion, that ambition thwarted in its career, doth speedily lead on to madness ; herein I am strengthened by what I learn in my Lord of Essex, who shifteth from sorrow and repentance to rage and rebellion so suddenly, as well proveth him devoid of good reason or right mind. In my last discourse he uttered strange words bordering on such strange designs, that made me hasten forth and leave his presence. Thank heaven !

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I am safe at home, and if I go in such troubles again, I deserve the gallows for a meddling fool. His speeches of the Queen becometh no man who hath *mens sana in corpore sano*. He hath ill advisers, and much evil hath sprung from this source. The Queen well knoweth how to humble the haughty spirit ; the haughty spirit knoweth not how to yield, and the man's soul seemeth tossed to and fro like the waves of a troubled sea.'

One, at least, of Essex's railings that the Queen 'was grown an old woman, and as crooked in mind as in her carcase,' is said to have reached her ears, and hardened her heart against him.

Essex House, which stood on the river, west of the Temple, became the centre for disaffected politicians, both young nobles and Puritan divines. A plot was formed to seize Whitehall and compel the Queen to dismiss her Council, and summon a Parliament. On February 9th, 1601, Essex, with some hundred followers, rode along Fleet Street and up Ludgate Hill, attempting in vain to rally the people to his support. Rumours of the rising had reached the Court : Whitehall had been barricaded, and he was forced to surrender. A letter of Cecil's bears witness to Elizabeth's courage :

'Even when a false alarm was brought to the

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queen, that the city was revolted with them, she never was more amazed than she would have been to have heard of a fray in Fleet Street.'

Essex, although he denied to the last any treacherous or disloyal intentions against the Queen herself, was condemned to die a traitor's death. Elizabeth revoked the first warrant, then acquiesced in the sentence. She did not try to shift her responsibility for his execution as in the case of Mary Stuart, but she indulged her private grief for the tragic end of the man whom she had once loved like a son: 'She sleepeth not so much by day as she used,' says a letter from Court, 'neither taketh rest by night. Her delight is to sit in the dark, and sometimes with shedding tears to bewail Essex.' Harington writes of her a few months later:

'She is quite disfavoured, and unattired, and these troubles waste her much. She disregardeth every costly cover that cometh to the table, and taketh little but manchet and succory potage. Every new message from the city doth disturb her, and she frowns on all the ladies. . . . I must not say much, even by this trusty and sure messenger; but the many evil plots and designs have overcome all her Highness' sweet temper. She walks much in her privy chamber, and stamps with her feet at ill news, and thrusts her rusty sword at times into the arras in great rage. My Lord Buckhurst is much with her,

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and few else since the city business ; but the dangers are over, and yet she always keeps a sword by her table.'

The worst of all evils had befallen the Queen :

- her belief in the love of her people was shaken : as she wrote herself :
- 'it appeareth now by one's example more bound than all or any others, how little faith there was in Israel.'

The truce arranged by Essex had lasted till November 1599, when Tyrone gave notice of cessation, and again appealed to Spain for help. Early next year Elizabeth sent Lord Mountjoy to Ireland, a more competent general than Essex, and less hampered by hostile criticism from home. In September 1601 the promised support arrived at last : 4500 Spanish soldiers were landed in Kinsale Harbour. Mountjoy, who was in Dublin, marched south, encouraged by a characteristic note from the Queen :

' Since the brain-sick humour of unadvised assault hath seized on the hearts of our causeless foes, we doubt not but their gain will be their bane, and glory their shame, that ever they had the thought there. And that your humour agrees so rightly with ours, we think it most fortunately happened in your rule to show the better whose you are, and what you be, as your own hand-writ hath told us of late, and do beseech the Almighty Power of the Highest so to

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guide your hands that nothing light in vain but to prosper your head that nothing be left behind that might avail your praise ; and that yourself in venturing too far, make the foe a prey of you. Tell our Army from us, that they make full account that every 100 of them will beat a 1000, and every 1000 theirs doubled. I am the bolder to pronounce it in His name that ever hath protected my righteous cause in which I bless them all. And putting you in the first place, I end, scribbling in haste, your loving Sovereign,

‘ E. R.’

The main Spanish force, besieged by Mountjoy at Kinsale, capitulated on January 2nd, 1602. Threats of another Spanish invasion came to nothing, and the rest of the troops were withdrawn, leaving the Irish to fight on unaided. Tyrone made offers of submission on the lines discussed by himself and Essex, and finally declared himself ready in December to submit unconditionally. At first Elizabeth resisted the advice of her councillors : she would carry on the war and wipe out the rebels. Essex had lost his life for a few hours' disloyalty : Tyrone had defied her for years. If he was to go free why should Essex have suffered ? The Queen was failing, and reasons of State had little weight with the woman. Harington tells how, when he was summoned to her presence,

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he 'found her in most pitiable state. She bade the Archbishop ask me if I had seen Tyrone. I replied, with reverence, that "I had seen him with the Lord Deputy." She looked up, with much choler and grief in her countenance, and said, "Oh now it mindeth me that you was *one* who saw this man *elsewhere*" :—and hereat, she dropped a tear, and smote her bosom. She held in her hand a golden cup, which she often put to her lips ; but, in sooth, her heart seemeth too full to lack more filling. This sight moved me to think on what passed in Ireland ; and I trust she did not think less on *some* who were busier there than myself.' Early in February Elizabeth yielded : Mountjoy was authorised to promise Tyrone his life, and, a few days later, liberty and pardon. He went to Dublin in April, intending to go to England, and make his submission to the Queen in person : there he heard of her death. The conquest of Ireland had been effected, but the cost is computed at over five years' revenue, and more lives were lost there than during the naval war with Spain.

CHAPTER XIII

'The Queen did once ask my wife in merry sort, "how she did keep my good will and love, which I did always maintain to be truly good towards her and my children?" My Mall, in wise and discrete manner, told her Highness "she had confidence in her husband's understanding and courage, well founded on her own steadfastness not to offend or thwart, but to cherish and obey; hereby did she persuade her husband of her own affections, and in so doing did command his." "Go to, go to, Mistress," saith the Queen, "you are wisely bent, I find; after such sort do I keep the good will of all my husbands, my good people; for if they did not rest assured of some special love toward them, they would not readily yield me such good obedience."'

SIR JOHN HARINGTON.

THE Court was growing weary of pageantry: the central figure, the Queen of Love and Beauty, was faded and grim. In 1600 only a poor following attended her from Whitehall to the Surrey Palace of Nonsuch. Elizabeth was angry. If one of her subjects had tried to set himself above her, all the more need that she should show herself to be indeed the Queen: her magnificent setting must remain undisturbed. While Essex was eating his heart out



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in disgrace, she kept up a brave show, relinquishing none of her usual pleasures. In May we hear that 'Her Majesty is very well ; this day she appoints to see a Frenchman do feats upon a rope, in the Conduit Court. Tomorrow she hath commanded the bears, the bull, and the ape, to be baited in the Tiltyard. Upon Wednesday, she will have solemn dancing.' She was present at Lord Herbert's marriage in June, being carried from the waterside in a 'lectica, made like half a litter,' specially provided for her. After supper the Masque came in, as I writ in my last,' says our good gossip, 'and delicate it was, to see eight ladies so prettily and richly attired. Mrs. Fitton led, and after they had done all their own ceremonies, these eight lady masquers chose eight ladies more to dance the measures. Mrs. Fitton went to the Queen, and wooed her to dance ; her Majesty asked what she was ; *Affection*, she said. *Affection !* said the Queen, *Affection* is false. Yet her Majesty rose and danced.' She danced : to refuse would have been to admit defeat, but she could not forget the man whose love had failed her. Once Essex would have been at her side, the most brilliant and devoted of that gay assembly. *Affection* was false, and her loneliness greater

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than ever : the subtle, disingenuous Cecil with all his cleverness never became her mainstay as his father had been. To those about her the strain was visible enough. 'I do see the Queen often,' writes Sir Robert Sidney, 'she doth wax weak since the late troubles, and Burghley's death doth often draw tears from, her goodly cheeks ; she walketh out but little, meditates much alone, and sometimes writes in private to her best friends.' He notices sympathetically that though her attire is more sumptuous than ever, and her manners as queenly, she is terribly tired by her visit to Penshurst, the beautiful home of the Sidneys :

'Her Highness hath done honour to my poor house by visiting me, and seemed much pleased at what we did to please her. My son made her a fair Speech, to which she did give a most gracious reply. The women did dance before her, whilst the cornets did salute from the gallery ; and she vouchsafed to eat two morsels of rich comfit cake, and drank a small cordial from a gold cup. She had a marvellous suit of velvet borne by four of her first women attendants in rich apparel ; two Ushers did go before, and going upstairs she called for a staff, and was much wearied in walking about the house, and said she wished to come another day. Six drums and six trumpets waited in the Court, and sounded at her approach and departure. My wife did bear herself in wondrous good-liking, and was attired in a

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purple kirtle, fringed with gold ; and myself in a rich band and collar of needlework, and did wear a goodly stuff of the bravest cut and fashion, with an under body of silver and loops. The Queen was much in commendation of our appearances, and smiled at the Ladies, who in their dances often came up to the step on which the seat was fixed to make their obeisance, and so fell back into their order again.'

In August, when she went on Progress to Tottenham, the Earl of Hertford's, she scornfully bid the old lords stay behind : only the young and able should attend her. And next month she went herself from the Palace of Oatlands to Hampton Court where the Lord Admiral was mourning his brother, 'to call him from his solitariness,' and induce him to join in her sports. Lord Harry Howard was also graced by a little motherly fuss, she 'commanded his bed should be set up in the Council chamber, when it was ill lying in the tents, by the storms and tempests we have had here.'

Her mind was as lively as ever. Lambarde, the antiquary, who had the honour of explaining his *Pandecta* of the Tower Records, bears witness to the rightness of her questions, and Sir William Brown to the 'Tush, Brown,' with which she argued about details concerning affairs in the Netherlands, whence he had just

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come. Sir William's account of her welcome to him, when she was walking in the garden, shows that she still knew how to win the hearts of her subjects :

' . . . and so, indeed, I had no sooner kissed her sacred hands, but that she presently made me stand up, and spoke somewhat loud, and said, Come hither, Brown ; and pronounced that she held me for an old faithful servant of hers, and said, I must give content to Brown, or some such speeches : and then the train following her, she said, Stand back, stand back, will you not let us speak but you will be hearers ? and then walked a turn or two, protesting her most gracious opinion of myself : And before God, Brown, said she, they do me wrong that will make so honest a servant be jealous that I should mistrust him.'

When Cecil joined them and they were discussing military matters :

' Her Majesty presently said unto me, Dost thou see that little fellow that kneels there ; it hath been told you, that he hath been an enemy to soldiers ; on my faith, Brown, he is the best friend the soldiers have. He answered, that it was from her Majesty alone, from whom flowed all soldiers' good.'

There is all Elizabeth's genius in that little touch of familiarity : the good Brown could not doubt now that he stood high in his Queen's confidence.

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In the end of October 1601 the Queen summoned her last Parliament. They assembled in a refractory mood. When she left the House of Lords after the opening ceremony the customary cry, 'God bless your Majesty,' came from few mouths. Essex's execution was not the cause : it had been accepted as a political necessity by the middle and upper classes, though his memory died hard among the people as in the heart of their Queen :

'All ye that cry O hone O hone,
Come now and sing O Lord with me.
For why? Our jewell is from us gone,
The valiant knight of chivalry.'

Nor did the enormous cost of the Spanish and Irish wars trouble Parliament : subsidies greater in amount than ever before were passed without a murmur. But over one grievance a storm had long been brewing. The Queen was in the habit of granting certain monopolies, secured by letters under the great seal, and known as patents. These, like the wine patent withdrawn from Essex, carried the privilege of exporting or importing certain goods, otherwise forbidden by law, or of granting licences, like Sir Walter Raleigh's right to charge inn-keepers for

their licences, or of manufacturing particular articles, such as drinking-glasses, or of copyrights, for example, that of the Psalms. It was a cheap and ready way of subsidising needy courtiers and rewarding old servants, a convenient substitute for a salary or a pension. During the latter part of her reign, in spite of Burghley's efforts to check the flow of patents, the Queen had issued a considerable number. In 1597 the matter had been raised in Parliament, and at the closing ceremony after the subsidy bill had been presented to her, she instructed the Lord Keeper to reply that 'touching the Monopolies, her Majesty hoped that her dutiful and loving subjects would not take away her Prerogative, which is the chiefest Flower in her Garden, and the principal and head Pearl in her Crown and Diadem; but that they will rather leave that to her disposition. And as her Majesty hath proceeded to trial of them already, so she promiseth to continue that they shall all be examined to abide the trial and true Touchstone of the Law.' But the promise had not been kept, and the abuse of the prerogative continued with the consequent raising of prices and restriction of trade. Now, in 1601, two bills dealing with patents were presented, and a bitter debate ensued.

Member after member rose to complain of the increased price of such necessities as salt, steel, and starch. Lists of patents were passed round the House, so long and comprehensive that one speaker enquired ironically whether bread was not among them. The excitement was not confined to Parliament, although its proceedings were supposed to be secret : men were crying in the streets ‘ God prosper those that further the overthrow of these monopolies.’ The disturbance came to the Queen’s ears : perhaps Cecil warned her that the debate must be stopped, or her prerogative might suffer : he had himself remarked that ‘ I have been (though unworthy) a member of this House in six or seven Parliaments, yet never did I see the House in so great confusion.’ She sent for the Speaker, who delivered her gracious message : ‘ It pleased her Majesty to say unto me, that if she had an hundred tongues she could not express our hearty good Wills. And further she said, that as she had ever held our good most dear, so the last day of our (or her) Life should witness it ; and that the least of her subjects was not grieved, and she not touched. She appealed to the Throne of Almighty God, how careful she hath been and will be to defend her People from all Oppressions. She said,

that partly by intimation of her Council, and partly by divers Petitions that have been delivered to her both going to the Chapel and also to walk abroad, she understood that divers Patents, which she had granted, were grievous to her Subjects ; and that the Substitutes of the Patentees had used great Oppressions. But she said, she never assented to grant any thing which was *Malum in se* and if in the abuse of her Grant there be anything evil (which she took knowledge there was) she herself would take present Order of reformation. I cannot express unto you the Apparent Indignation of her Majesty towards these abuses. She said that her Kingly Prerogative (for so she termed it) was tender ; and therefore desireth us not to fear or doubt of her careful reformation ; for she said, that her Commandment was given a little before the late troubles (meaning the Earl of Essex's matters) but had an unfortunate event : but that in the midst of her most great and weighty occasions, she thought upon them. And that this should not suffice, but that further Order should be taken presently and not *in futuro* (for that also was another word which I take it her Majesty used) and that some should be presently repealed, some suspended, and none put in Execution, but such

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as should first have a Trial according to the Law for the good of the People. Against the abuses her wrath was so incensed, that she said, that she neither could nor would suffer such to escape with impunity.'

Cecil announced that the message would be confirmed by a royal proclamation, and jocosely reassured the House : ' And because you may eat your meat more savourly than you have done, every man shall have salt as good cheap as he can either buy it or make it, freely without danger of that Patent, which shall be presently revoked. The same benefit shall they have which have cold Stomachs, both for *Aquavitae* and *Aqua composita* and the like. And they that have weak stomachs, for their satisfaction, shall have Vinegar and Alegar, and the like set at liberty. Train Oil shall go the same way : Oil of Blubber shall march in equal rank ; Brushes and Bottles endure the like judgment.'

A few days later the Queen herself, sitting under the Cloth of State in the Council Chamber at Whitehall, gave audience to some sevenscore members. When the Speaker had expressed their humble thanks for her most gracious message in terms suited to a goddess rather than a mortal sovereign, they all knelt to hear the Queen's answer. After acknowledging

the present of their thanks, she said : ' I do assure you, that there is no Prince that loveth his Subjects better, or whose Love can counter-vail our Love ; There is no Jewel, be it of never so rich a prize, which I prefer before this Jewel, I mean your Love ; for I do more esteem it than any Treasure or Riches : for that we know how to prize, but Love and Thanks I count inestimable. And though God hath raised me High, yet this I count the Glory of my Crown, that I have reigned with your Loves. This makes me that I do not so much rejoice that God hath made me to be a Queen, as to be a Queen over so thankful a People. Therefore I have cause to wish nothing more than to content the subject, and that is a duty which I owe. Neither do I desire to live longer days, than that I may see your Prosperity, and that's my only desire. And as I am that Person that still, yet under God, hath delivered you, so I trust, by the Almighty Power of God, that I still shall be his Instrument to preserve you from Envy, Peril, Dishonour, Shame, Tyranny, and Oppression, partly by means of your intended helps, which we take very acceptably, because it manifesteth the largeness of your Loves, and Loyalties unto your Sovereign.'

She asked the Speaker to convey her thanks

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to the House, and then told those present to rise from their knees as she would trouble them with yet longer speech. She expressed her thankfulness that the abuse had been brought to her knowledge. 'Since I was Queen, yet did I never put my Pen to any Grant, but that upon pretext and semblance made unto me, that it was both good and beneficial to the subjects in general, though a private profit to some of my ancient servants who had deserved well : . . . That my Grants should be grievous to my People, and Oppressions to be Privileged under colour of our Patents, our Kingly Dignity shall not suffer it ; Yea, when I heard it I could give no rest to my thoughts until I had reformed it. Shall they think to escape unpunished, that have thus oppressed you, and have been disrespectful of their duty, and regardless of our Honour ? . . . I know the Title of a King is a Glorious Title ; but assure yourself, that the shining glory of Princely Authority hath not so dazzled the Eyes of our understanding, but that we will know and remember, that We also are to yield an account of our Actions before the great Judge. To be a King and wear a Crown is more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasure to them that bear it. For my Self, I was never so much enticed

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with the glorious name of a King, or Royal Authority of a Queen, as delighted that God hath made me this Instrument to maintain his Truth and Glory, and to defend this Kingdom (as I said) from Peril, Dishonour, Tyranny and Oppression. There will never Queen sit in my Seat with more Zeal to my Country, Care to my subjects, and that will sooner with willingness yield and venture her Life for your Good and Safety than my Self. And though you have had and may have many Princes more mighty and wise sitting in this Seat, yet you never had or shall have any that will be more Careful and Loving. . . . And so I commit you all to your best Fortunes, and further Counsels. And I pray you Mr. Comptroller, Mr. Secretary, and you of my Council, that before these Gentlemen depart into their Countries, you bring them all to kiss my Hand.'

With this last royal gesture the great Queen left the stage, assured that she had kept the one thing she valued above all else, her people's love : the long drama of her reign was drawing to a close.

EPILOGUE

‘I am no lover of pompous title, but only desire that my name may be recorded in a line or two, which shall briefly express my name, my virginity, the years of my reign, the reformation of religion under it, and my preservation of peace.’

THE old woman lived on. She might mount her horse wearily, laugh at a clown, listen to Irish tunes, though, said one of her courtiers, William Byrd’s Lullaby would soon be the only fit music, watch her ladies dancing, or even dance herself alone before her mirror, for the benefit of James’s Ambassador, whose master must think her still a Queen. But she made less and less effort to disguise her years and her increasing melancholy. The coronation ring had long grown into the flesh of her finger : now—evil omen—she ordered it to be filed. Harington tried to amuse her with his verses : she smiled, and said : ‘When thou dost feel creeping time at thy gate, these fooleries will please thee less ; I am past my relish for such matters : thou seest my bodily meat doth not suit me well ; I have eaten but

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one ill-tasted cake since yesternight.' Wit had, lost its savour, though, to the last, she could listen to 'old Canterbury tales.' Harington tells how 'she rated most grievously, at noon, at some who minded not to bring up certain matters of account. Several men have been sent to, and when ready at hand, her Highness hath dismissed in anger ; but who, dearest Mall, shall say, that "your Highness hath forgotten." ' A queen must not forget : this was an aged woman scolding her servants.

In the middle of January 1603, Elizabeth caught cold, and was definitely ill. Dr. Dee, her pet astrologer, is said to have warned her against Whitehall : on the last day of the month the Court moved to Richmond. There, for a time, she seemed in better health : early in February she was able to receive the Venetian Ambassador in full state, but a second audience was postponed. In March she was obviously very ill. Sir Robert Cary, his marriage long since forgiven, tells how he was summoned to her presence :

'When I came to Court, I found the Queen ill-disposed, and she kept her inner lodging ; yet she, hearing of my arrival, sent for me. I found her in one of her withdrawing chambers, sitting low upon her cushions. She called me to her, I kissed her

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hand, and told her it was my chiefest happiness to see her in safety and in health, which I wished might long continue. She took me by the hand, and wrung it hard, and said, "No, Robin, I am not well"; and then discoursed with me of her indisposition, and that her heart had been sad and heavy for ten or twelve days, and in her discourse she fetched not so few as forty or fifty great sighs. I was grieved at the first to see her in this plight; for in all my life-time before I never knew her fetch a sigh, but when the Queen of Scots was beheaded. Then, upon my knowledge, she shed many tears and sighs manifesting her innocence that she never gave consent to the death of that Queen.

'I used the best words I could to persuade her from this melancholy humour; but I found by her it was too deep-rooted in her heart, and hardly to be removed. This was upon a Saturday night, and she gave command that the great closet should be prepared for her to go to Chapel the next morning. The next day, all things being in a readiness, we long expected her coming. After eleven o'clock, one of the grooms came out and bade make ready for the private closet, she would not go to the great. There we stayed long for her coming, but at the last she had cushions lay'd for her in the privy chamber hardby the closet door, and there she heard service.

'From that day forwards she grew worse and worse. She remained upon her cushions four days and nights at the least. All about her could not persuade her either to take any sustenance or go to bed.'

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She grew worse, says Cary, 'because she would be so.' The Lord Admiral induced her at last to go to bed, but she refused all remedies. She had turned her face to the wall.

The succession had remained a forbidden subject, but the Privy Council no longer feared another War of the Roses. That James would become King of England was a foregone conclusion. Elizabeth's words of assent, reported in various forms, are probably apocryphal, and Cary's account the true one :

'On Wednesday the twenty-third of March she grew speechless. That afternoon, by signs, she called for her Council, and by putting her hand to her head, when the King of Scots was named to succeed her, they all knew he was the man she desired should reign after her.

'About six at night she made signs for the Archbishop and her Chaplains to come to her, at which time I went in with them, and sat upon my knees, full of tears to see that heavy sight. Her Majesty lay upon her back, with one hand in the bed, and the other without. The Bishop kneeled down by her, and examined her first of her faith ; and she so punctually answered all his several questions, by lifting up her eyes, and holding up her hand, as it was a comfort to all the beholders. Then the good man told her plainly what she was, and what she was to come to ; and though she had been long a great Queen here upon earth, yet shortly she was to

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yield an account of her stewardship to the King of Kings. After this he began to pray, and all that were by did answer him. After he had continued long in prayer, till the old man's knees were weary, he blessed her and meant to rise and leave her. The Queen made a sign with her hand. My sister Scroope knowing her meaning told the Bishop the Queen desired he would pray still. He did so for a long half hour after, and then thought to leave her. The second time she made sign to have him continue in prayer. He did so for half an hour more, with earnest cries to God for her soul's health, which he uttered with that fervency of spirit, as the Queen to all our sight much rejoiced thereat, and gave testimony to us all of her Christian and comfortable end. By this time it grew late, and every one departed, all but her women that attended her.'

Between two and three next morning, in her seventieth year, Elizabeth died in her sleep. James was at once proclaimed king, 'for neither man nor mouse once peeped against her indubitat heir.' But over Whitehall the Queen still held a ghostly sway.

'The body of the late Queen by her own orders has neither been opened, nor, indeed, seen by any living soul save by three of her ladies,' writes the Venetian Ambassador to the Signory. 'It has been taken to Westminster near London, and lies there in the palace, all hung with mournings. There the Council waits on her continually with the same cere-

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mony, the same expenditure, down to her very household and table service, as though she were not wrapped in many a fold of cerecloth, and hid in such a heap of lead, of coffin, of pall, but was walking as she used to do at this season, about the alleys of her gardens. And so, in accordance with ancient custom, will it continue till the King gives orders for her funeral.'

Her last pageant was enacted a month later : on the coffin, covered by a purple pall, lay a wax effigy, crowned and robed, a sceptre in her hand, to recall for a moment to the subjects of James I. the Queen who had reigned over them for more than forty-four years.

Elizabeth had put the whole of herself into her task, her strength and her weakness. She had set herself to be a great Queen, and she had not failed. With all her indecision, with all her delays, with all her contempt for truth when a lie might serve her purpose better, her assumptions of credit not due to her, and repudiations of blame she deserved, she had kept steadily before herself the two aims of winning the confidence of her people, and of securing, so long as it was possible, peace for her country. She was well served, but she chose her servants. Chance sometimes favoured her, but her luck was not the luck that comes to fools. She made mistakes, but happily for

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her people they were not the mistakes of a dreamer. She deserves to be remembered, and she is remembered, as she would have wished to be remembered, 'the natural mother of this state.' She bequeathed to her successors a problem and an example. The Stuarts failed to solve the problem, because they could not rise to the height of the example, and, standing on the ruins of the Church which she had fostered and the monarchy which she had based so firmly on her people's love, Cromwell spoke her epitaph in words which Time has ratified—'Queen Elizabeth of famous memory—we need not be ashamed to call her so.'

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

AN exhaustive bibliography of the Elizabethan period will be found in vol. vi. of *The Political History of England, 1547-1603*, by Professor A. F. POLLARD, who is the indispensable guide for all students of Elizabethan history. An account of the last fifteen years may also be read in Professor CHENEY's *History of England after the Armada*. The following notes, like this study itself, are intended not for the student, but for the general reader.

With all allowance for his preconceptions and his violent prejudice against the Queen herself, FROUDE cannot be neglected. For the religious settlement HALLAM, close-grained and austere, and MAITLAND in the *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. ii., brilliant and conclusive. For the naval history CORBETT, *Drake and the Tudor Navy* and *The Successors of Drake*. The reader who wishes to get the sea atmosphere of the reign will read FROUDE's *Elizabethan Seamen*, and then browse in HAKLUYT (Everyman's Library, with the Poet Laureate's Introduction). BAGNALL's *Ireland Under the Tudors* is a piece of careful and impartial history. For the personal and anecdotal side of the reign including its pageantry MUMBY's *The Girlhood*

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